

Managing Groups



Blackboard 9

Well-designed and supported student learning teams – or, just plain groups -- can make a world of difference in the quality of the learning climate in your classroom. Likewise, poorly designed and unsupported learning teams can seem like a waste of time – both to you and to your students.

In general, keep in mind that in order for students to successfully participate in workgroups and effectively apply the knowledge generated there, both you and they need to embrace the process of team learning.

Tuckman's 5 Stages of Group Development



In 1965 Bruce Tuckman was unveiled what would become a staple of group dynamics. Tuckman described four (later five) phases of group development – forming, storming, norming, and performing (later, he added adjourning). The phases are not to be perceived as sequential, however – groups are messy, and cycle through the phases throughout their process.

(Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental Sequence in Small Groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63, 384-399.)

Stage 1 - Forming: In the *Forming* stage, personal relations are characterized by dependence. Group members rely on safe, patterned behavior and look to the group leader for guidance and direction. Group members have a desire for acceptance by the group and a need to know that the group is safe. They set about gathering impressions and data about the similarities and differences among them and forming preferences for future sub-grouping. Rules of behavior seem to be to keep things simple and to avoid controversy. Serious topics and feelings are avoided.

The major task functions also concern orientation. Members attempt to become oriented to the tasks as well as to one another. Discussion centers around defining the scope of the task, how to approach it, and similar concerns. To grow from this stage to the next, each member must relinquish the comfort of non-threatening topics and risk the possibility of conflict.

Stage 2 - Storming: The next stage, which Tuckman calls *Storming*, is characterized by competition and conflict in the personal-relations dimension and organization in the task-functions dimension. As the group members attempt to organize for the task, conflict inevitably results in their personal relations. Individuals have to bend and mold their feelings, ideas, attitudes, and beliefs to suit the group organization. Because of "fear of exposure" or "fear of failure," there will be an increased desire for structural clarification and commitment. Although conflicts may or may not surface as group issues,

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they do exist. Questions will arise about who is going to be responsible for what, what the rules are, what the reward system is, and what criteria for evaluation are. These reflect conflicts over leadership, structure, power, and authority. There may be wide swings in members' behavior based on emerging issues of competition and hostilities. Because of the discomfort generated during this stage, some members may remain completely silent while others attempt to dominate.

In order to progress to the next stage, group members must move from a "testing and proving" mentality to a problem-solving mentality. The most important trait in helping groups to move on to the next stage seems to be the ability to listen.

Stage 3 - Norming: In Tuckman's *Norming* stage, interpersonal relations are characterized by cohesion. Group members are engaged in active acknowledgment of all members' contributions, community building and maintenance, and solving various group issues. Members are willing to change their preconceived ideas or opinions on the basis of facts presented by other members, and they actively ask questions of one another. Leadership is shared, and cliques dissolve. When members begin to know-and identify with-one another, the level of trust in their personal relations contributes to the development of group cohesion. It is during this stage of development (assuming the group gets this far) that people begin to experience a sense of group belonging and a feeling of relief as a result of resolving interpersonal conflicts.

The major task function of stage three is the data flow between group members. They share feelings and ideas, solicit and give feedback to one another, and explore actions related to the task. Creativity is high. If the group members attain this stage of data flow and cohesion, their interactions are characterized by openness and sharing of information on both a personal and task level. They feel good about being part of an effective group.

The major drawback of the norming stage is that members may begin to fear the inevitable future breakup of the group; they may resist change of any sort.

Stage 4 - Performing: The *Performing* stage is not reached by all groups. If group members are able to evolve to this stage four, their capacity, range, and depth of personal relations expand to true interdependence. In this stage, people can work independently, in subgroups, or as a total unit with equal facility. Their roles and authorities dynamically adjust to the changing needs of the group and individuals. Stage four is marked by interdependence in personal relations and problem solving in the realm of task functions. By now, the group should be most productive. Individual members have become self-assuring, and the need for group approval is past. Members are both highly task oriented and highly people oriented. There is unity: group identity is complete, group morale is high, and group loyalty is intense. The task function becomes genuine problem solving, leading toward optimal solutions and optimum group development. There is support for experimentation in solving problems and an emphasis on achievement. The overall goal is productivity through problem solving and work.

Stage 5 - Adjourning: Tuckman's final stage, *Adjourning*, involves the termination of task behaviors and disengagement from relationships. A planned conclusion usually includes recognition for participation and achievement and an opportunity for members to say personal goodbyes. Concluding a group can create some apprehension - in effect, a minor crisis. The termination of the group is a regressive movement from giving up control to giving up inclusion in the group. The most effective interventions in this stage are those that facilitate task termination and the disengagement process.

Group Size

With an increase in group size comes an increase in complexity – on several levels. Obviously, there are a greater number of potential interactions, but there is also a complexity of roles that members play and the ways that they interact with one another in the larger group. (Information in this section adapted from J. Dan Rothwell's *In Mixed Company: Communicating in Small Groups and Teams*, 5th ed. Thomson Wadsworth, 2004.)

- Larger groups typically have more non-participants than smaller groups, due to increased competition to “seize the floor.” Reticent members tend to not attempt to find a way into the conversation. More talkative members tend to emerge as leaders – due to their ability to hold the floor.
- Smaller groups inhibit overt disagreement and signs of dissatisfaction more than larger groups. Small groups tend to generate pressure to conform within the group. In a six-person group, one nonconformist may emerge to stand

alone against the group, while in a twelve-person group, two or more nonconformists are likely to emerge, forming a splinter group or faction.

- Group size affects levels of cooperation. Smaller groups tend to work together more interdependently on tasks, sustain collaborative effort, and be the most cooperative, exhibiting consensus leadership. Larger groups show less cooperative, task effectiveness, and increased conflicts and unmet goals.
- Group members tend to be less satisfied with groups of ten or more. Larger groups tend to obviously deteriorate and cause stress and anxiety in group members. Dominate group members tend to become more aggressive and forceful with members while trying to impose order.

So, what's the best size group for your students? Group process researchers tell us that the best size for a group is the smallest size capable of performing the task effectively. Here are some additional points.

- Large groups make consensus difficult, but moderate-sized groups are especially effective if there is little overlap among the members in terms of knowledge and skills and the group task requires that diversity.
- If the goal is speed, groups of three or four are most effective.
- Some research suggests five-member groups are a nice compromise and work fairly well in terms of diversity, speed, ability to reach consensus, and informed decision making. But even five-members groups can deteriorate, get stalled, or become otherwise unhealthy.

Strategies for Making It Work

Now that you've familiarized yourself with the research, done your planning, and set the stage with your students, consider also trying some of these "best of" practices.

- In general, assign students to groups rather than allowing them to self-select. The group needs to work as a cohesive whole, creating its own culture independently from any alliances that some group members may already have.
- If you are going to hold students accountable for learning in groups, teach students how to work in groups.
- Don't just grade on the final product. Make your assessment plan process-centric – make effective group interaction and cooperation a criterion in grading.

What to Do BEFORE You Put Them Together

Whether you are putting together small groups for a quick exercise in class or larger groups for a graded term project, you've got to do some planning. For instance, you'll need to think about ...

- What is the purpose of the group?
- What are the specific goals of the group?
- What type of group will this be?
- What specific techniques and strategies will be used?
- How will I determine each group's members, and how many members will there be?
- Will the group be expected to meet outside of class? Will they utilize group pages on Blackboard?
- Will I hold students accountable for the work they do outside of class via minutes on their group pages in Blackboard, a written log, reflections, etc.?
- Will I assign roles, or will I expect the group to assign roles?
- What will be the group rules? How will these be conveyed?
- How will I prepare participants for the group?
- What problems can I expect to run into, and how will I deal with those?
- How will I handle dropouts?
- Under what circumstances will I remove a member from the group?
- How will I assess outcomes of the group?

Setting Up the Learning Team Climate

To ensure group success don't just create the assignment and then send students off to fend for themselves in their groups. Try a little processing first to set the stage and get students in the right frame of mind.

Some Ways to Help Move Students into Group Work

- Have students depict their “best ever” and “worst ever” group experiences in a quick write, concept map, or other method. Encourage them to draw on both academic and nonacademic experiences. Then, in a whole group discussion, solicit their experiences, keeping a record on the board of characteristics of successful and unsuccessful group experiences.
- Share your thoughts about the importance of collaboration and learning communities in your own work, and call attention to the ways that you've had to learn to be a good team member – how that individual work on yourself is progressing, goals that you have for your future work in groups, etc.
- Ask students if they have concerns about the group work that you will be doing in class – whether small, ungraded activities or larger, graded projects. Encourage them to voice their concerns about roles that others take and ways that processes can fall apart. Doing this increases accountability with members who might otherwise slack off or derail.
- Focus on communication in group processes, and ask students to come to consensus (beforehand) about the best approaches to dealing with dominant members, silent members, vultures, etc.
- Ask each person to write a group work goal on an index card and pass it into you. Use those goals to form groups, to think about future reflections, to check in mid-process, etc.

Consider grading individuals on their constructive critiques of other groups' presentations as well.

- To increase accountability, ask for progress reports early on, and be sure to include reports on the function of the group. If feasible, use Blackboard's group pages to make groups accountable through visibility.
- Start with positive feedback. Students are hesitant to criticize one another, so in the first round of feedback, ask them to tell each other (and you) at least one positive contribution that each group member has made to the group.
- Rather than allowing students to privately criticize the group in your office hours or through documents, make the feedback public in the group.
- Allow some time in class for group meetings and planning (even if it's just five or ten minutes at the end of each class).
- Make yourself accessible to groups both in person during in-class group work time, as well as through email, office hours, in-person group check-ins, and the Blackboard small groups feature.
- Don't try to squeeze learning team projects into a few weeks. Groups need time to form, storm, and norm before they perform (and adjourn). If you don't have time in your syllabus to support groups, then don't assign them.
- Share the final products of the group work with the entire class – perform! – and teach student audience members how to provide meaningful critique.
- Work with students to create a meaningful group evaluation form or adapt one that you find online or in a group process textbook. **Remember to incorporate a strong group and individual reflection component to the group work.**

Thinking About Assessment

Students seem most concerned about how they will be graded for group projects, and their concern is grounded in both good and bad experiences. The following discussion is reproduced (and somewhat adapted in format and terminology) from Australia's Centre for the Study of Higher Education. (<http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/group.html>)

Weighing-up the options for group assessment

Getting the assessment right is critical. Decisions about how to structure the assessment of group work need to be focused around four factors:

1. Whether what is to be assessed is the product of the group work, the process of the group work, or both (and if the latter, what will be the proportion of each).

2. What criteria will be used to assess the aspect(s) of group work of interest (and who will determine these criteria – teacher, students or both).
3. Who will apply the assessment criteria and determine marks (lecturer, students – peer and/or self-assessment or a combination).
4. How will marks be distributed (shared group grade, group average, individually, combination).

1. Product, process or both?

Many teachers believe there is a need to assess the group process as well as the products or outcomes, but what exactly the “process” means must be explicit and transparent for students. For example, if you want to assess “the level of interaction,” how might a conscientious student ensure they reach “an outstanding” level? What is “an outstanding” level?

The example above raises the question of how you can confidently know the level of interaction that has taken place. You would either have to involve yourself intimately in the workings of each group or rely on student self or peer-assessment. Less often, assessment is focused solely on the product of group work: “It is not all that important to know what they do in their groups . All I'm interested in is the final product - how they arrive at it is the business of the students.”

Most commonly, there is an interest in both the process and product of group work and the decision becomes: “What proportion of assessment will focus on each?” This needs to be answered up front for the students, and really comes down to the overall expectations you, as the instructor, have for the group work. Weigh the expectations of the quality you are looking for in the final outcome/product along with the student learning about group processes, and then find the proportion that works best for your stated objectives. Over time you will find that this changes as your expectations change.

2. What criteria and who says so?

Criteria for the assessment of group work can be determined by teachers, students or through consultation between the two. Groups are most successful when students are involved in establishing their own criteria for assessment through consultation with teachers. These criteria are then used to assess and grade the group work. A clear understanding of the intended learning outcomes in which the group work occurs is a useful starting point for determining criteria for assessment of the group work itself. Once these broader learning requirements are understood, a consideration of how the group task, and criteria for assessment of that task, fit into those broad requirements can then follow.

It is easier to establish criteria separately for the process and product of group work than to attempt to do both at once. The generation of criteria for the assessment of products of group work is relatively straightforward given the similarity between these and individual assessment submissions (products) in other contexts. Criteria for process, as appropriate to the subject and group work objectives, may include, for example:

- regular meeting attendance
- equity of contribution
- evidence of cooperative behavior
- appropriate time and task management
- application of creative problem solving
- use of a range of working methods
- varied use of multiple group roles (facilitator, reporter, timekeeper, etc.)



3. Who is the assessor - lecturer, student or both? and

4. Who gets the marks - individuals or the group?

Assessment and grading practices have a central role in optimizing the quality of group interaction and more generally in directing student learning in group work. In a wide-ranging interview about group assessment, students were asked if they

could change one thing about this experience, what it would be. One third-year student said, “I would get the lecturers to clearly outline their expectations so that we know what amount of work and effort will get what mark.” Another said, “I would make marking of group work consistent.”

Other Assessment Possibilities

- The teacher gives two grades - one for the group presentation of the product (shared) and one for a reflective piece from each individual member on the workings of the group itself (individual).
- Students receive two grades for the group work - one for the final group report/presentation from teacher and one for their individual contribution to the team as assessed by the others in their group.
- **Portfolio Evaluation:** The potential for evidence-based assessment of group work via a portfolio may be worth investigating in particular contexts. In principle, portfolios are useful in two major ways. The first is that they demonstrate the student's knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes relevant to the area of study. Secondly, they are likely to be learning experiences in themselves because the individual student learns from the construction of the portfolio.

A portfolio should include both agreed criteria that are aligned with the requirements of the subject and examples of work that demonstrate knowledge and understanding of that criteria. With this option, either the teacher or the student judges individual merits via components of and/or the whole portfolio. Components might include, for example:

- report(s)
- assignment(s)
- meetings minutes
- observational data
- interview data
- reflective pieces
- journal entries
- any evidence of the achievement of the set criteria

The likely benefits include the opportunity for a teacher to get a clear idea of individual contributions, an authentication of each student's experience, the reduction of plagiarism and increased student responsibility for their learning.

However, assessing and grading portfolios can be very time-consuming for teachers (or students where self- or peer-evaluation is used) and information from students may be subjective and therefore compromise reliability. This sort of option is also especially difficult with large classes.

The following section provides some assessment options for the products and processes of group work where staff and/or students are responsible for allocating marks. Four tables are provided:

- a. Options for teacher assessment of group work product (page 7)
- b. Options for student assessment of group work product (page 8)
- c. Options for teacher assessment of group work process (page 9)
- d. Options for student assessment of group work process (page 10)

The assessment options and some of their likely advantages and disadvantages, both inherent and in relation to other

assessment options, are outlined in the tables. Finally, a short list of assessment options that combine product and process foci and staff and student assessors is provided.

The suggestions offered in this section are not intended to form an exhaustive list of all possible group assessment options. They are an examination of some of the most commonly used options and intended as a set of prompts for consideration when designing group assessment.

Table 1: Options for teacher assessment of group product

Based on Winchester-Seeto (2002)¹.

Assessment Option	Some Possible Advantages	Some Possible Disadvantages
<p><u>Shared Group Mark</u></p> <p>The group submits one product and all group members receive the same grade from the lecturer/tutor, regardless of individual contribution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourages group work - groups sink or swim together. ● Decreases likelihood of plagiarism more likely with individual products from group work. ● Relatively straightforward method. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual contributions are not necessarily reflected in the grades. ● Stronger students may be unfairly disadvantaged by weaker ones and vice versa.
<p><u>Group Average Grade</u></p> <p>Individual submissions (allocated task or individual reports as described below) are graded individually. The group members each then receive an average of these grades.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May provide motivation for students to focus on both individual and group work and thereby develop in both areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May be perceived as unfair by students. ● Stronger students may be unfairly disadvantaged by weaker ones and vice versa.
<p><u>Individual Grade - Allocated Task</u></p> <p>Each student completes an allocated task that contributes to the final group product and gets the grade for that task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A relatively objective way of ensuring individual participation. ● May provide additional motivation to students. ● Potential to reward outstanding performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Difficult to find tasks that are exactly equal in size/complexity. ● Does not encourage the group process/collaboration. ● Dependencies between tasks may slow progress of some students.
<p><u>Individual Grade - Individual Report</u></p> <p>Each student writes and submits an individual report based on the group's work on the task/project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensures individual effort. ● Perceived as fair by students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Precise manner in which individual reports should differ often very unclear to students. ● Likelihood of unintentional plagiarism increased.
<p><u>Individual Mark - Examination</u></p> <p>Exam questions specifically target the group projects, and can only be answered by students who have been thoroughly involved in the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May motivate students more to learn from the group project including learning from the other members of the group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May diminish importance of group work. ● Additional work for teacher in designing exam questions. ● May not be effective; students may be able to answer the questions by reading the group reports.
<p><u>Combination of Group Average and Individual Grade</u></p> <p>The group grade is awarded to each member with a mechanism for adjusting for individual contributions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perceived by many students as fairer than shared group grade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Additional work for teacher in setting up procedure for and in negotiating adjustments.

¹Winchester-Seeto, T. (April, 2002). Assessment of collaborative work - collaboration versus assessment. Invited paper presented at the Annual Uniserve Science Symposium, The University of Sydney, 5th April.

Table 2: Options for student assessment of group product
(Winchester-Seeto)

Assessment Option	Some Possible Advantages	Some Possible Disadvantages
<p><u>Student Distribution of Pool of Grades</u></p> <p>Teacher awards a set number of grades and lets the group decide how to distribute them.</p> <p>For example, the product is marked 80 (out of a possible 100) by the teacher. There are four members of the group. Four by 80 = 320 so there are 320 marks to distribute to the four members. No one student can be given less than zero or more than 100. If members decide that they all contributed equally to the product then each member would receive a grade of 80. If they decided that some of the group had made a bigger contribution, then those members might get 85 or 90 and those who contributed less would get a lesser grade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Easy to implement. ● May motivate students to contribute more. ● Negotiation skills become part of the learning process. ● Potential to reward outstanding performance. ● May be perceived as fairer than shared or average group grade alone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open to subjective evaluation by friends. ● May lead to conflict. ● May foster competition and therefore be counterproductive to team work. ● Students may not have the skills necessary for the required negotiation.
<p><u>Students Allocate Individual Weightings</u></p> <p>Teacher gives shared group grade, which is adjusted according to a peer assessment factor. The individual student's grade comes from the group grade multiplied by the peer assessment factor (eg. X 0.5 for "half" contribution or X 1 for "full" contribution).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As above.
<p><u>Peer Evaluation - Random Marker, Using Criteria, Moderated</u></p> <p>Completed assessment items are randomly distributed to students who are required to complete a grading sheet identifying whether their peer has met the assessment criteria and awarding a mark. These grades are moderated by the teacher and, together with the peer grading sheets, are returned with the assessment item.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Helps clarify criteria to be used for assessment. ● Encourages a sense of involvement and responsibility. ● Assists students to develop skills in independent judgment. ● Increases feedback to students. ● Random allocation addresses potential friendship and other influences on assessment. ● May provide experience parallel to career situations where peer judgment occurs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time may have to be invested in teaching students to evaluate each other. ● Teacher moderation is time consuming.

Table 3: Options for teacher assessment of group process
(Winchester-Seeto)

Assessment Option	Some Possible Advantages	Some Possible Disadvantages
<p><u>Individual Grade - Based on Records/ Observation of Process</u></p> <p>Each group member's contribution (as defined by predetermined criteria) is assessed using evidence from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● team log books ● minutes sheets and/or ● direct observation of process and they are awarded a grade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Easy to implement. ● May motivate students to contribute more. ● Negotiation skills become part of the learning process. ● Potential to reward outstanding performance. ● May be perceived as fairer than shared or average group grade alone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open to subjective evaluation by friends. ● May lead to conflict. ● May foster competition and therefore be counterproductive to team work. ● Students may not have the skills necessary for the required negotiation.
<p><u>Group Average Grade - Based on Records/ Observation of Process</u></p> <p>Each group member's contribution (as defined by predetermined criteria) is assessed using evidence from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● team log books ● minutes sheets and/or ● direct observation of process and the group members each then receive an average of these grades. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As above.
<p><u>Individual Grade - for Paper-Analyzing Process</u></p> <p>Grades attributed for an individual paper from each student analyzing the group process, including their own contribution and that of student colleagues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Helps clarify criteria to be used for assessment. ● Encourages a sense of involvement and responsibility. ● Assists students to develop skills in independent judgment. ● Increases feedback to students. ● Random allocation addresses potential friendship and other influences on assessment. ● May provide experience parallel to career situations where peer judgment occurs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time may have to be invested in teaching students to evaluate each other. ● Teacher moderation is time consuming.

Table 4: Options for student assessment of group process

(Winchester-Seeto)

Assessment Option	Some Possible Advantages	Some Possible Disadvantages
<p><u>Peer Evaluation - Average Grade, Using Predetermined Criteria</u></p> <p>Students in a group individually evaluate each other's contribution using a predetermined list of criteria. The final grade is an average of all grades awarded by members of the group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Helps clarify criteria to be used for assessment. ● Encourages sense of involvement and responsibility on part of students. ● May assist students to develop skills in independent judgment. ● Provides detailed feedback to students. ● Provides experience parallel to career situations where group judgment is made. ● May reduce teacher's grading load. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May increase teacher workload in terms of briefing students about the process, ensuring the criteria are explicit and clear, teaching students how to evaluate each other. ● Students may allow friendships to influence their assessment - reliability an issue. ● Students may not perceive this system as fair because of the possibility of being discriminated against.
<p><u>Self-Evaluation - Moderated Grade, Using Predetermined Criteria</u></p> <p>Students individually evaluate their own contribution using predetermined criteria and award themselves a grade. Teachers moderate the grades awarded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Helps clarify criteria to be used for assessment. ● Encourages sense of involvement and responsibility on part of students. ● May assist students to develop skills in independent judgment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May increase lecturer/tutor workload in terms of briefing students about the process, ensuring the criteria for success are explicit and clear, teaching students how to evaluate themselves. ● Self-evaluations may be perceived as unreliable.

Sample Group Assignments

Business

A class is covering how location, demographics, and traffic patterns affect the success of small businesses. Each group is given a numbered thumbtack and 30 minutes to decide where in the city they would open a small dry-cleaning business, and must write a half-page justification of their decision. At the end of the time, one representative from each group must approach a large map of the city hung on the wall and put their thumbtack in the map where they would open their business. They must simultaneously turn in their written justifications. Class discussion then ensues, comparing the decisions among the groups, and the written rationales are graded for the amount and specificity of citation from the reading they incorporate.

Geology

In the discussion sections of a large lecture class, students work frequently in teams on in-class activities. The only out-of-class activity is a term-long project in which they are given a list of geological features to identify in the local area. They check out digital cameras that the teacher has provided (or has directed the students to the proper media check out area on campus) and they must take the best (most illustrative) picture of each geological feature that they are able. On the last week of class, the teacher shows the chosen photographs from one discussion section to the other, and the students vote on which pictures best exemplify each of the geological features represented. This reward structure prevents groups from only voting for their own slides.

Early Intervention/Psychology

After studying various disorders that occur in early childhood, groups are required to design diagnosis procedures for a given disorder before learning how these procedures take place in the "real world." They are to write a half page list of diagnosis steps, with rationales for each step taken from their readings. They turn in their diagnosis plans (which are graded for the amount and specificity of citation from the reading they incorporate), and then they hear how these diagnoses take place in the "real world" and discussion ensues over the advantages and disadvantages of various methods.

Biology

Groups are given a list of plants to identify and an outdoor field marked off with a section for each group. They have a limited amount of time to find and tag examples of each kind of plant. After the tagging session, groups then look at the plants other groups have tagged and can "challenge" the other group's tags. If the challengers are right, they get extra points and the challenged group loses points. If the challengers are wrong, they lose points and the challenged group gains points. This reward structure encourages every group to work with the finest of distinctions among plant types, hoping to "trick" other groups into challenging them.

Journalism

Student groups are required to examine several different college-level student newspapers (or specific student newspaper websites.) They are to choose the one they feel best exemplifies specific journalistic principles being studied, and turn a short written justification for their choice. The groups simultaneously report back on their choices and class discussion then ensues about the relative merits of each candidate. The written rationales are graded for the amount and specificity of citation from the reading they incorporate.

Using Blackboard

Blackboard's Groups Features allow instructors to build study or project groups. The instructor has the option of giving the group access to:

Blogs – Blogs are spaces within Blackboard that allow users to post their own content to share with the group, and allows for other users to comment on that content. You can also set up a graded blog here.

Collaboration – The Chat and Virtual Classroom tools allow users to participate in real time lessons and discussions and also view archives of previous sessions.

Discussion Board – The Discussion Board is a communication medium for posting and responding to messages. This feature is designed for asynchronous use; meaning users are not present at the same time to converse online. An advantage of the Discussion Board is that conversations are logged and organized. Conversations are grouped in threads that contain a main posting and all related replies.

Email – If enabled, the Group Email features allows user to easily send email messages to other group members.

File Exchange – The Group File Exchange enables users to exchange files with members of their group.

Journals – Journals are spaces within Blackboard that allow users to post their own content to share with the instructor, and allows for other users to comment on that content. You can also set up a graded journal here.

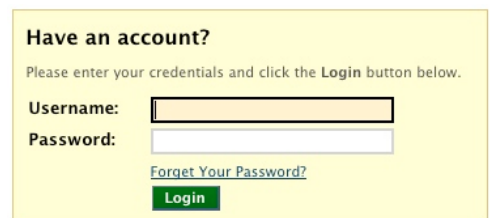
Tasks – Group Tasks allow members to set up certain tasks that informs the group of upcoming or in progress tasks.

My Scholar Home/Scholar Course Home – Scholar is an area within Blackboard that is a clearing house of resources that have been posted by other users across the Blackboard system (not limited within a single course site).

Wikis – Wikis are spaces where students can all collaborate on a single entry. You can also set up a graded wiki here.

Adding Single Groups to Blackboard

1. Go to the UO Blackboard website at <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu>.
2. Locate the Login box and enter your uoregon username (e.g. jdoe99) and the corresponding password (same as your email account).
3. You will enter a page entitled *My UO* that will welcome you by name. The *My Courses* section shows a list of classes you are teaching and enrolled in. You will also see a tab entitled *Courses*, which is a list that includes course sites for all courses where you are the instructor of record in the Registrar's database. Note: All students who have registered in the corresponding CRN will automatically be signed up for that blackboard course site.
4. Click on a course name to enter that course site.
5. Locate the *Course Management* and *Control Panel* section, located at the bottom left of your screen.
6. Locate the *Users and Groups* section and click on the *Groups* link.
7. Click on the *Create Single Group* option.



- **Self Enroll:** This option allows the instructor to set up the group parameters and then open up the enrollment to individual students, who can now pick the group they want to enroll into.
- **Manual Enroll:** This option allows the instructor to both set up the group parameters and enroll the specific students into the group.

8. For both types of groups, *Self Enroll* and *Manual Enroll*, locate Section #1 entitled Group Information and enter a *Name* and *Description*.

For example you might *Name* a group after the business or philosopher that the group is researching (i.e. IBM or Socrates). If you are using a collaborative research model, you might name the group after its portion of the project (i.e. presentation group). For a mock trial, you might label the groups prosecution, defense and jury. If there aren't names that fit the assignment, be creative and have fun. Use fruit names, Oregon landmarks, building on campus, etc.

When you write a *Description* for the group be sure to detail your expectations for use by including things like student names and the assignment the group has been set up for. Additionally, let students know you can enter the group to help out and assess their process. Note the example on the right.

Example of a Group Description

Group members include Deshun Givins, Pam Trimble and Carlos Brathwaithe.

As a team, use the discussion board in this section to post the testimony from the witnesses you feel would most benefit your case. Each team member should interview at least 3 witnesses.

I've also made the virtual chat available. You may choose to use it as you see fit.

I'll be checking in periodically this week to see how things are going.

9. Determine whether or not you want to make the group visible to students now and check the appropriate radio button. Options include *No* and *Yes* for all groups and additionally *Sign-up Sheet Only* for Self Enroll.
10. Locate the list of tools in the *Tool Availability* section. Click once on the checkbox of each communication feature you want to activate. (Refer back to page 12 for a description of each feature.)
11. Check or uncheck the *Allow Personalization* box to *Allow individual group members to personalize group space modules*. This allows students to customize their group *Home Page* color scheme and add an image banner.
12. For *Self Enroll* groups:
- Locate the *Sign-up options* and enter in a *Name of Sign-up Sheet*, and type in some basic instructions in the *Sign-up Sheet Instructions* box.
 - Enter in the *Maximum Number of Members*.
 - Check the *Show Members* box if you want to *Allow Students to see name of other members in a group before they sign-up*.
 - Make sure the *Allow Students to sign-up from the Groups Area* box is also checked.
 - Click the *Submit* button.
13. For *Manual Enroll* groups:

- i. Locate the *Membership* section (section #4).
 - ii. Locate the individual students you want to enroll in the *Items to Select* box.
 - iii. Click and highlight the student name, then click on the arrow pointing to the right box to enroll the student.
 - iv. Repeat until done.
 - v. To un-enroll a student click and highlight that student's name in the *Selected Items* box and click on the arrow pointing left.
 - vi. Click the *Submit* button.
14. Your browser will display a receipt page letting you know the server received your data.
 15. Click the *Ok* button to return to the *Group Management* page. The group(s) you just created will now be visible.
 16. Repeat steps 7-15 for each group you want to create.

Adding Group Sets to Blackboard

1. Locate the *Course Management and Control Panel* section, located at the bottom left of your screen.
2. Locate the *Users and Groups* section and click on the *Groups* link.
3. Click on the *Create Group Set* option.
 - **Self Enroll:** This option allows the instructor to set up the group parameters and then open up the enrollment to individual students, who can now pick the group they want to enroll into from a selected number of groups.
 - **Manual Enroll:** This option allows the instructor to both set up the group parameters and enroll the specific students into a selected number of groups.
 - **Random Enroll:** This option allows the instructor to set up groups that randomly enroll students into a selected number of groups.
4. For all types of *Group Sets* locate Section #1 entitled Group Information and enter a *Name* and *Description*.

For example you might *Name* a group after the business or philosopher that the group is researching (i.e. IBM or Socrates). If you are using a collaborative research model, you might name the group after its portion of the project (i.e. presentation group). For a mock trial, you might label the groups prosecution, defense and jury. If there aren't names that fit the assignment, be creative and have fun. Use fruit names, Oregon landmarks, building on campus, etc.

When you write a *Description* for the group be sure to detail your expectations for use by including things like student names and the assignment the group has been set up for. Additionally, let students know you can enter the group to help out and assess their process. Note the example on page 13.

5. Determine whether or not you want to make the group visible to students now and check the appropriate radio button.
6. Locate the list of tools in the *Tool Availability* section. Click once on the checkbox of each communication feature you want to activate. (Refer back to page 12 for a description of each feature.)

7. Check or uncheck the *Allow Personalization* box to *Allow individual group members to personalize group space modules*.
8. For *Self Enroll* groups:
 - i. Chose the setting for *Group Available* option: *No*, *Yes*, or *Sign-up Sheet Only*.
 - ii. Locate the *Sign-up options* and enter in a *Name of Sign-up Sheet*, and type in some basic instructions in the *Sign-up Sheet Instructions* box.
 - iii. Enter in the *Maximum Number of Members*.
 - iv. Check the *Show Members* box if you want to *Allow Students to see name of other members in a group before they sign-up*.
 - v. Make sure the *Allow Students to sign-up from the Groups listing page* box is also checked.
 - vi. Locate the *Group Set Options* section and enter in the *Number of Groups* you want total.
 - vii. Click the *Submit* button.
9. For *Manual Enroll* groups:
 - i. Locate the *Group Set Options* section and enter in the number of groups you want total.
 - ii. Click on *Submit*.
 - iii. This will take you to another screen where the enrollment of students is done.
 - iv. Locate the *Group Set Members Filter Options* and make sure the check boxes are checked or unchecked according to your own preferences for seeing course roles and if you want to have the option to enroll students in more than one group: *Remove Members already in a Group from the Available Members List*.
 - v. In the *Group Set Enrollments* section you can chose to either *Randomize Enrollments* or individually select students by their names. For individually selecting students click and highlight the student name, the click on the arrow pointing to the right box to enroll the student.
 - vi. Repeat until done.
 - vii. To un-enroll a student click and highlight that student's name in the *Selected Items* box and click on the arrow pointing left.
 - viii. To delete a group just click on the *Delete Group* button below the group section for each group you want to delete, and you can also add new groups by clicking the *Add Group* button at the bottom of section #3.
 - ix. Click the *Submit* button.
10. For *Random Enroll* groups:
 - i. Locate the *Membership* section.
 - ii. *Determine Number of Groups* by either the *Number of Students per Group* or *Number of Groups*.
 - iii. *Determine How to Enroll any Remaining Members* by selecting one of the following:

- *Distribute the remaining members amongst the groups*
- *Put the remaining members in their own group*
- *Manually add the remaining members to groups*

iv. Click the *Submit* button.

11. Your browser will display a receipt page letting you know the server received your data.

12. Click the *Ok* button to return to the *Group Management* page. The group(s) you just created will now be visible.

13. Repeat steps 3-12 for each group you want to create.

Modifying, Emailing, and Deleting Groups

Modify Groups

1. Locate the *Course Management* and *Control Panel* section, located at the bottom left of your screen.
2. Locate the *Users and Groups* section and click on the *Groups* link.
3. You will see a listing of all the groups created for the course.
4. Click on the double down arrows to the right of the group name you want to modify and select *Edit*.
5. The information you entered when creating the group will appear. Make any necessary changes and click the *Submit* button.
6. Your browser will display a receipt page letting you know the server has made the modifications successfully. Click the *Ok* button to return to the *Group Management* page.

Email Groups

1. Locate the *Course Management* and *Control Panel* section, located at the bottom left of your screen.
2. Locate the *Users and Groups* section and click on the *Groups* link.
3. You will see a listing of all the groups created for the course.
4. Click on the double down arrows to the right of the group name you want to modify and select *Email*.
5. In this email composition screen select the users you want to email from the group (**Note:** You can select all the members at once by clicking on the *Select All* button). Move the selected members to the right box. Create an email subject title and compose your message in the *Message* box. You can also *Attach a file* by clicking on that link.
6. Click *Submit* and your email will be sent.

Remove Groups

1. Locate the *Course Management* and *Control Panel* section, located at the bottom left of your screen.
2. Locate the *Users and Groups* section and click on the *Groups* link.
3. You will see a listing of all the groups created for the course.
4. Click on the double down arrows to the right of the group name you want to modify and select *Delete*. **Note:** You can delete more than one group at a time by checking off the box to the left of the group name of all the groups you want to delete, and then selecting the *Delete* option above or below the listings.
5. Your browser will display a receipt page letting you know the server has made the modifications successfully. Click the *Ok* button to return to the *Group Management* page.

For Further Exploration

Barbara Gross Davis's excellent site on group work and study teams: <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/collaborative.html>

Tuckman's model, on a page, and including his fifth stage: <http://www.chimaeraconsulting.com/tuckman.htm>.

A teamwork questionnaire based on Tuckman's model: <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/teamsuv.html>

Thiagi.com's "Secrets of Successful Facilitators": <http://www.thiagi.com/article-secrets.html>

Our own "What can I do to make group work meaningful?" page: <http://tep.uoregon.edu/resources/newteach/groupwork.html>

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<p>Additional Support for Faculty</p>	<p>Center for Media and Educational Technologies Consulting 19 Knight Library 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., M - F cmetconsult@uoregon.edu (541) 346-1942</p>	<p>Center for Media and Educational Technologies Ground Floor, Knight Library mediasvc@uoregon.edu (541) 346-3091</p>

About Our Organization...

The University of Oregon supports the teaching endeavors of its faculty and graduate students through the Teaching Effectiveness Program (TEP), a division of the University Teaching and Learning Center.

The Teaching Effectiveness Program offers a variety of activities and services to engage the academic community in viewing, assessing, and improving undergraduate instruction. TEP services are free to faculty members, graduate teaching fellows (GTFs), and university departments.

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