Facilitating Group Work in Your Brightspace Course

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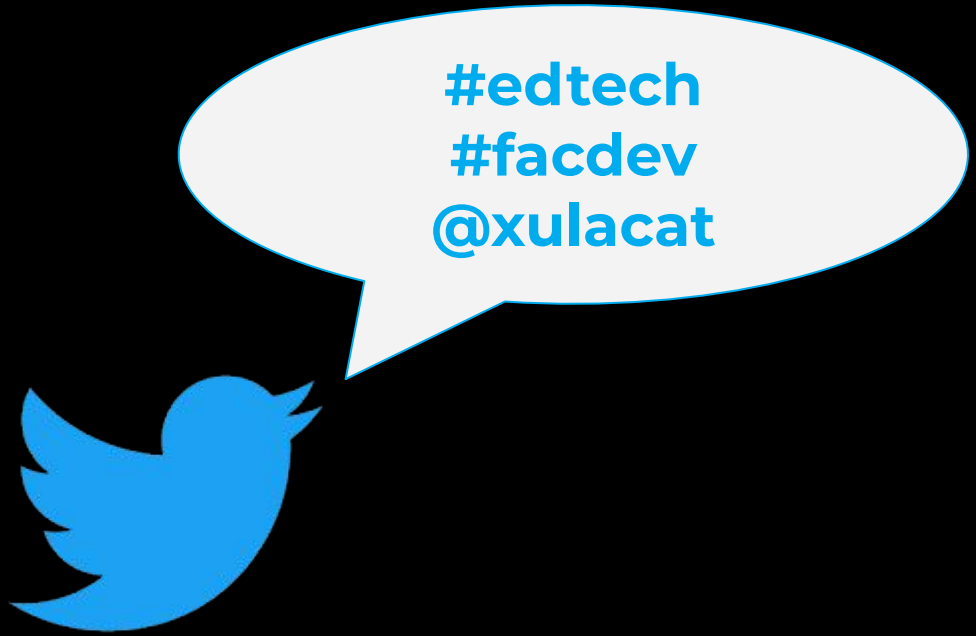

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Group Work

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Quality Matters

- QM Standard 5 - Learner Activities & Learner Interaction
  - 5.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.
  - **5.2 Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.**
  - 5.3 The instructor's plan for interacting with learners during the course is clearly stated.
  - 5.4 The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated.

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Quality Matters

- QM Standard 6 - Course Technology
  - 6.1 The tools used in the course support the learning objectives or competencies.
  - **6.2 Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.**
  - 6.3 A variety of technology is used in the course.
  - 6.4 The course provides learners with information on protecting their data and privacy.

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Seven Principles of Good Pedagogical Practice

1. Encourages contact between students and faculty.
2. **Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students.**
3. Encourages active learning.
4. Gives prompt feedback.
5. Emphasizes time on task.
6. Communicates high expectations.
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

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Chickering & Gamson, 1987

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2. Develops Reciprocity and Cooperation Among Students

"Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning."

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3. Encourages Active Learning

"Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves."

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Essential Questions When Considering Group Work

1. What is your motivation for assigning group work? What is the purpose?
2. Who should be involved in designing and delivering the group work? What resources do you need?
3. How will you assess the group work and what do you want to evaluate?
4. How will groups be formed?
5. How much time is needed to complete the activity?
6. Which technology will best support the groups?

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Source: Designing Effective Group Work
Digital Learning & Design at Brown University

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Group & Team Work

- Low-stakes, shorter-term, informal group interactions
- Higher-stakes formal team projects

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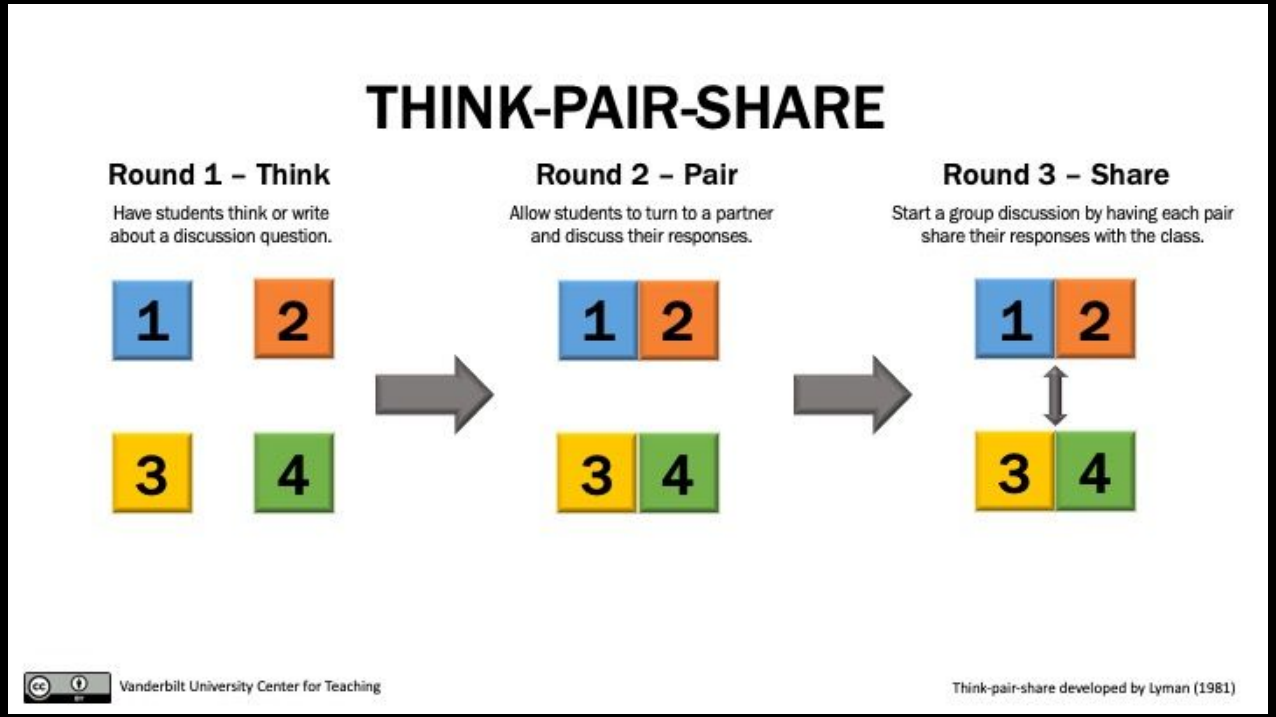
Low-Stakes, Shorter-Term, Informal Group Interactions



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Source: Group work: Using cooperative learning groups effectively
Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt University

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Low-Stakes, Shorter-Term, Informal Group Interactions

PEER INSTRUCTION

Question

Post a conceptually based multiple-choice question.

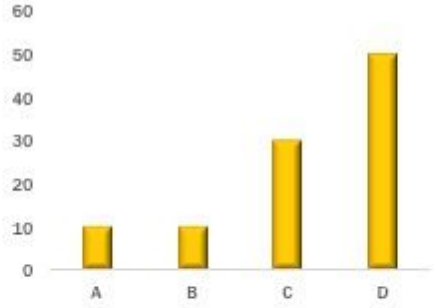
Your sister calls to say she's having twins. Which of the following is more likely? (Assume she's not having identical twins.)

A. Twin boys
B. Twin girls
C. One boy, one girl
D. All are equally likely

Source: derekbruff.org/?p=1938

Individual Responses and Discussion

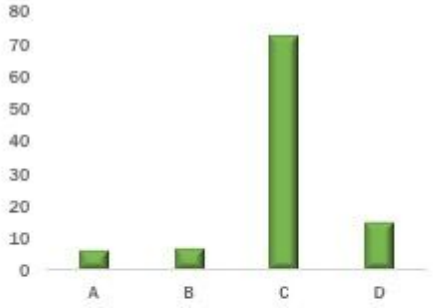
Have students answer with a personal response devices (e.g. clickers) then turn to a neighbor and discuss.



Responses Before Discussion

Re-voting

Allow students to change their answers after discussion. Display responses and use as stimulus for class discussion.



Responses After Discussion

Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching

Peer instruction developed by Mazure (1990)

Source: Group work: Using cooperative learning groups effectively
Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt University

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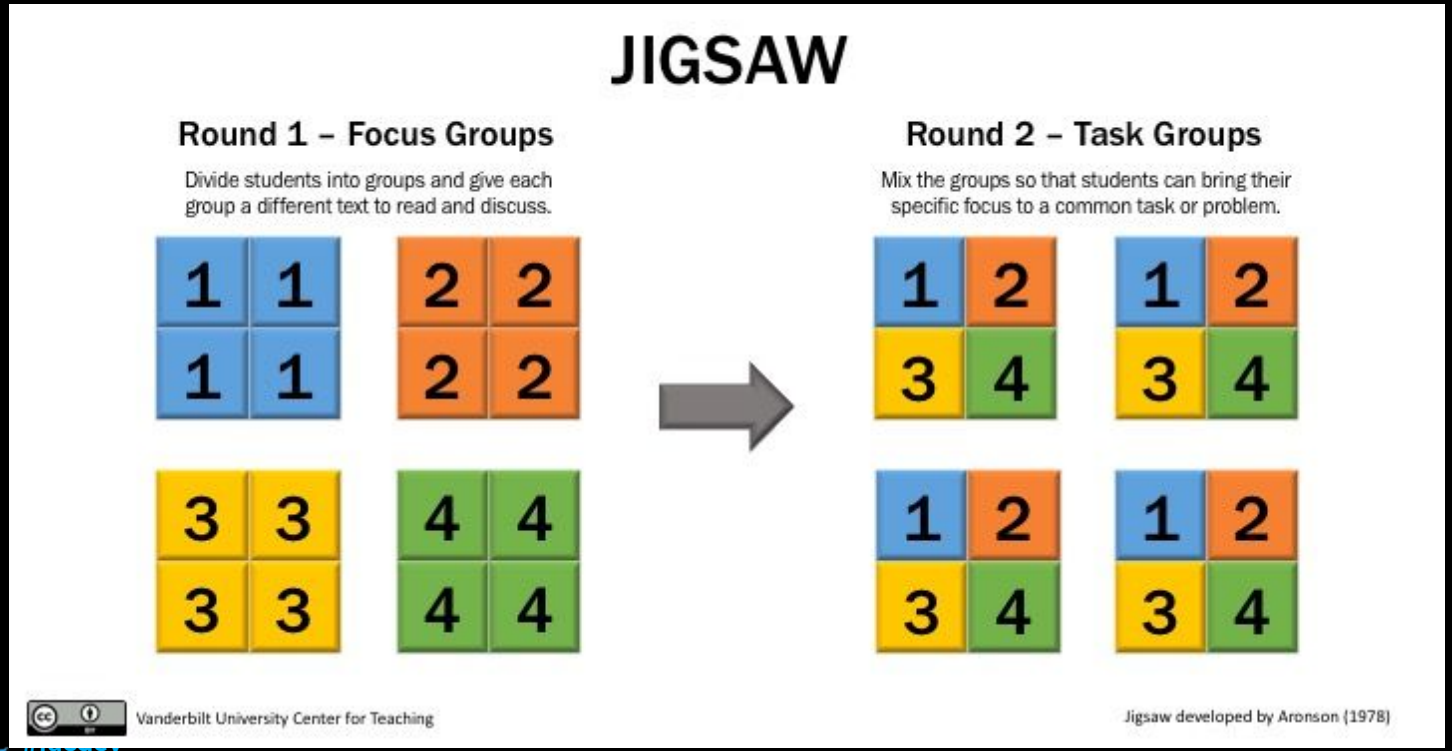

Source: Group work: Using cooperative learning groups effectively
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Formal Cooperative Learning Groups

- Students work together for one or more class periods to complete a joint task or assignment

Source: Group Work: Using Cooperative Learning Groups Effectively
Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt University

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Best Practices for Designing Group Work

- Create interdependence
- Devote time specifically to teamwork skills
- Build in individual accountability

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Source: Using Group Projects Effectively
Eberly Center at Carnegie Mellon University

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Create Interdependence

- Structure the project so that students are dependent on one another.

Strategies
Ensure projects are sufficiently complex that students must draw on one another's knowledge and skills.
Create shared goals that can only be met through collaboration.
Limit resources to compel students to share critical information and materials.
Assign roles within the group that will help facilitate collaboration.

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Source: Using Group Projects Effectively
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Devote Time to Teamwork Skills

- Don’t assume students already know how to work in groups

Strategies
Emphasize the practical importance of strong teamwork skills.
Address negative or inaccurate preconceptions about group work.
Provide structure and guidance to help students plan.
Set interim deadlines.
Establish ground rules.
Teach and reinforce conflict-resolution skills.
Alert students to common pitfalls.
Foster metacognitive skills.
Incorporate process assessments.

Source: Using Group Projects Effectively
Eberly Center at Carnegie Mellon University

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Build in Individual Accountability

- Evaluate the work of the group as a whole AND ask individual group members to demonstrate their learning via quizzes, independent write-ups, weekly journal entries, etc.

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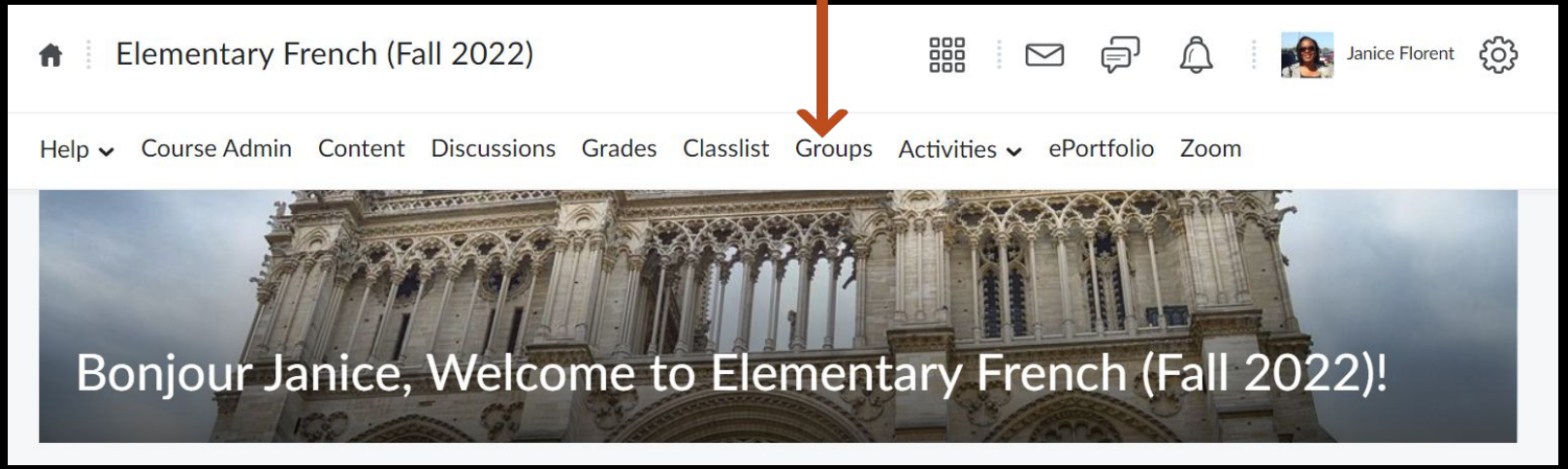
Groups Tool



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Groups Tool

- Group work areas
  - Use groups to organize users' work on projects and assignments
  - Create special work areas for users with different learning needs
- Each group can have its own:
  - Discussion forums
  - Assignments
  - Locker area to work in
- Users can belong to multiple groups within the same course
- Grade members of groups as a team or individually

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Group Categories

- **Category -** the assignment/activity the groups relate to
  - For example
    - “Class Presentations”
    - “Ethics Discussion Groups”
    - “Oceanography Group Project”
- **Group Prefix** - assigned to each group in the category
  - You can edit group prefixes to further identify the sub-groups in the category

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Group Enrollment Types

- Choose the **Enrollment Type** based on the following criteria:
  - Will the group enrollment be based on the number of people per group, the number of groups in the class, or both?
  - Will you allow students to self-enroll in a group?
  - Will you manually assign students to groups?

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Group Enrollment Types

Enrollment Type	Description
# of Groups Groups of #	Groups will be created by either number of groups (i.e., 4 groups total) or group size (i.e., groups of 4 students). Students will be randomly assigned to each group.
# of Groups - No Auto Enrollment	This option allows instructors to manually assign students to groups.
# of Groups - Self Enrollment Groups of # - Self Enrollment # of Groups, Capacity of # – Self Enrollment	Blank groups will be created for students to sign-up for. Students will be able to see the other members of their group.
Single user, member-specific groups	This option creates groups of one (1). Each group has a single user where the first name and last name of the learner is the name of the group.

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Groups in Action

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30-Day Challenge
October 2021

Purpose: This assignment allows you to put into practice some of the healthy behaviors we discuss by participating in them! Who knows? This class could actually improve your mental and physical health!

Task: With a group of classmates (3-4), you will choose a challenge from the options provided. For each challenge you can pick your level (beginner, intermediate, or advanced). It doesn't matter which level you pick or if you are 100% successful, as long as you push yourself a bit and try your hardest to meet the challenge. After you complete the challenge, you and your classmates, as a group, will create some sort of presentation or report of the experience and the results.

Your presentation or report should be something that you can *share* with others who might be interested in improving their own health behaviors. For instance, it can be a video you could post on social media, a pamphlet you could distribute to your club/sorority/church, and infographic you could hang up in the dorm, a Zine you could leave out in the UC, a podcast you produce, or anything else you can think of (just be sure to ask for my approval first). Be creative and make this worth your time and effort!

Your presentations/reports should clearly and thoughtfully address the following.

- Provide a summary of the health behavior you picked. That is, what do researchers know about how the behavior impacts both physical and mental health? Be sure to use at least two references from class and two *credible* references you found on your own.
- Why is this health behavior important for or relevant to college students, especially college students who want to be leaders in their fields?
- What factors helped you succeed in this challenge?
- What where some barriers or obstacles you faced?
- What advice would you give others who were interested in improving on this health behavior? (Be sure your advice matches the research evidence.)
- What are your plans regarding this health behavior moving forward?

Due Date: Presentations due by 4:00 PM Thursday Novemeber 4th. Late posts will be penalized half a letter grade (5%) per day up to 50%.

Grading Rubric:

Provided a thorough summary of health behavior	1 2 3 4 5
Accurately and clearly incorporated two class readings	1 2 3 4 5
Accurately and clearly incorporated two credible outside readings	1 2 3 4 5
Clearly explained relevance to college students	1 2 3 4 5
Explained factors that aided in success	1 2 3 4 5

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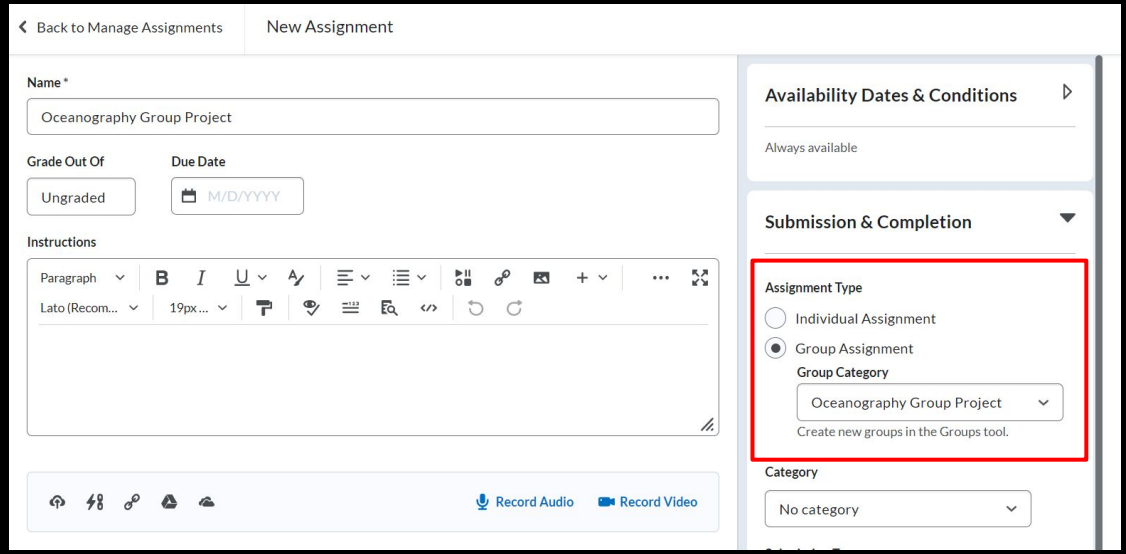
Group Assignments

- Any member of the group can submit on behalf of the group
- Instructor only needs to grade one submission per group



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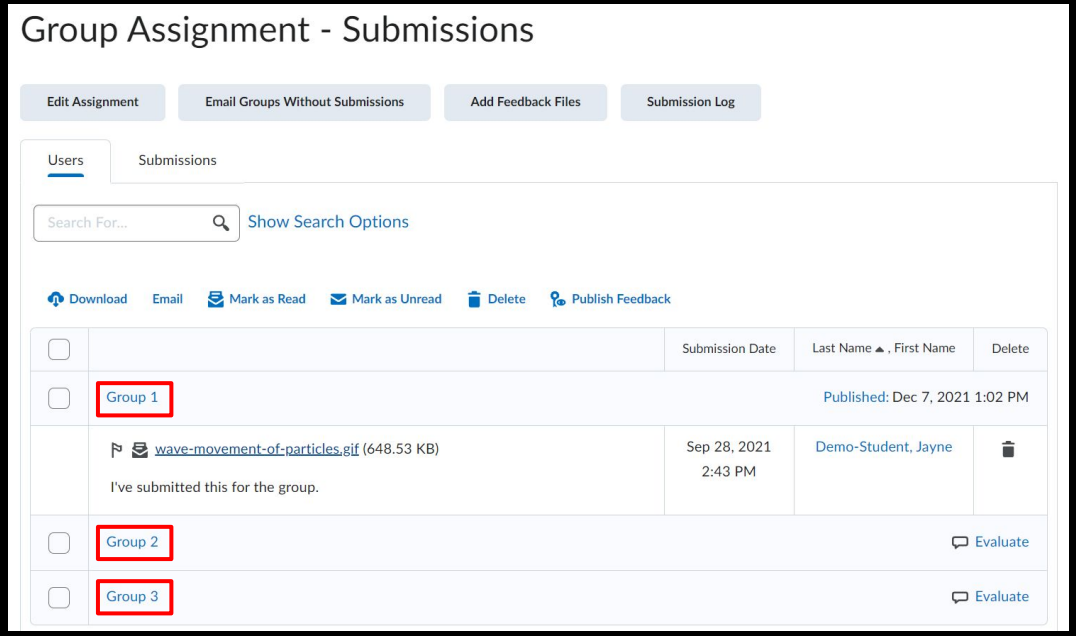
Grading Group Assignments

- All group members receive the same grade
  - Override the grade for individual students in the Grade Book



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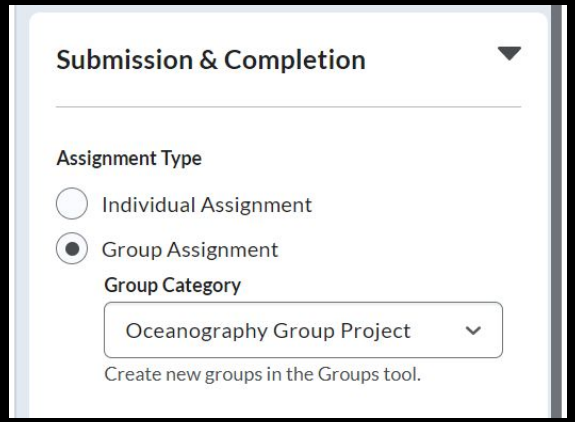
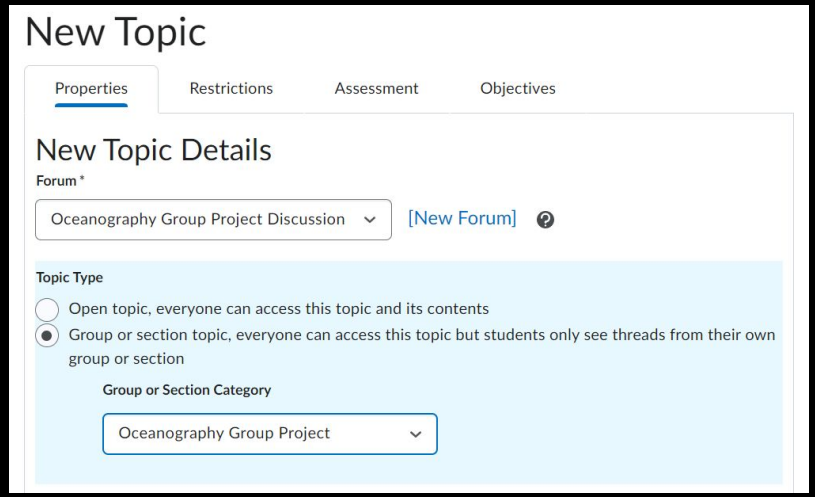
Recommendations for Creating Group Assignments and Group Discussions

- Create the groups first without creating assignment or discussion during group creation process
- During the assignment and/or discussion creation process, select group as the type





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Reduce Your Workload

- Avoid reinventing the wheel
- Design assessment tasks and feedback strategies carefully
- Help students plan and manage their groups effectively
- Use technology

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Source: Facilitating and Monitoring Group Work
Teaching at UNSW Sydney

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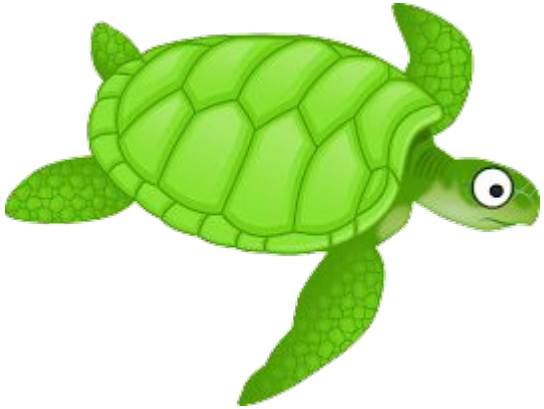
Check-in

I'm good to go

Stop, I need help



I'm a little confused

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Group Work Tip #1

- Groups can be created before all users have been added to a course, but it is a best practice to wait until all users are enrolled
  - Setting up groups after enrollment can ensure better distribution of users between groups

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Group Work Tip #2

- Groups have a maximum enrollment of 200 users
  - Create new group categories when there are more than 200 users to be enrolled in a group
  - There is no limit on the number of group categories in a course

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Group Work Tip #3

- Learners who are allowed to self-enroll will be able to join and leave groups up until the expiry date
- When selecting “Allocate unenrolled users after Self Enrolment Expiry Date”, all learners not in a group at the time of the expiry date will be placed in a group, and no learners will be able to leave or change groups

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Group Work Tip #4

- Use online discussion forums
  - Students can answer each other's questions about the group task or group processes
  - Instructor and students can provide answers to frequently asked questions about groups and group work

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Group Work Tip #5

- Use the Rubric tool to simplify grading and provide consistent evaluation and contextual feedback to students

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Group Work Tip #6

- Evaluate group assignments in the Assignment tool and then override grades for individual students in the Grade Book

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Group Work Tip #7

- Use the Surveys tool to get feedback from your learners to guide improvements to your design of future group assignments

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Potential Pitfall #1

- Users can belong to multiple groups within the same course, but cannot self-enroll in more than one group within a Group category

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Potential Pitfall #2

- Carefully consider options when creating items in Brightspace. There is a point in which some options are locked and cannot be changed.

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Workshop Slides, Recording, & Resources

https://catwiki.xula.edu/group

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