Designing Great Collaborative Assignments
(Group Work)

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Learning Objectives for this workshop:

• Participants will create a draft collaborative assignment idea.
• Participants will decide what type of group project would best fit their course/s.
• Participants will discuss the advantages/disadvantages of using a semester long group project, smaller projects within a class period, study groups or online groups in Blackboard.
• Participants will consider how to break down group projects into roles and manageable chunks for a semester timeline.

Agenda

1. Why use Group Work and Collaborative Assignments?
2. What does the research tell us?
3. What are the types of Group Work?
4. How to align Group Work to course learning goals.
5. Analyze some examples of Group Work.
6. Techniques for helping Group Work – WORK!
7. Brainstorm your own ideas for your class.
8. Questions?
Why use Group or Team based Learning?

Free Write:

WRITE:
Have you tried group work in the past? If so, write about what worked when you did the group work and what could use improvement.

PAIR - turn to a partner and discuss your answers.

SHARE – with your partner, write something on the board under each category.

What does the research tell us?
Seven Principles for Good Practices in Undergraduate Education

Good Practice:
- Encourages Student-Faculty Contact
- Encourages Cooperation Among Students
- Encourages Active Learning
- Gives Prompt Feedback
- Emphasizes Time on Task
- Communicates High Expectations
- Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

[Chickering and Gamson, 1987]

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals:
1. learning to work and solve problems in the company of others,
2. and sharpening one’s own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences.

Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm

(AAC&U, 2008)

Universal Design for Learning principles are based on neuroscience research and Universal Design in architecture

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

I. Provide Multiple Means of Representation
   1: Provide options for perception
      1.1 Offer ways of customizing the display of information
      1.2 Offer alternatives for auditory information
      1.3 Offer alternatives for visual information

2: Provide options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols
   2.1 Clarify vocabulary and symbols
   2.2 Clarify syntax and structure
   2.3 Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols
   2.4 Promote understanding across languages
   2.5 Illustrate through multiple media

3: Provide options for comprehension
   3.1 Activate or supply background knowledge
   3.2 Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships
   3.3 Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation
   3.4 Maximize transfer and generalization

4: Provide options for physical action
   4.1 Vary the methods for response and navigation
   4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies

5: Provide options for expression and communication
   5.1 Use multiple media for communication
   5.2 Use multiple tools for construction and composition
   5.3 Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance

6: Provide options for executive functions
   6.1 Guide appropriate goal-setting
   6.2 Support planning and strategy development
   6.3 Facilitate managing information and resources
   6.4 Enhance capacity for monitoring progress

7: Provide options for recruiting interest
   7.1 Optimize individual choice and autonomy
   7.2 Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity
   7.3 Minimize threats and distractions

8: Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence
   8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives
   8.2 Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge
   8.3 Foster collaboration and community
   8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback

II. Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression

III. Provide Multiple Means of Engagement

Principle 3: Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brain System</th>
<th>UDL Principle</th>
<th>Focus For Design Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective (emotions)</td>
<td>Provide multiple means of engagement</td>
<td>Class or online interactions where students engage with each other and with course content</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How learners get engaged and stay motivated: How they are challenged, excited, or interested. There are affective dimensions.

Learner

http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines/principle3

Discussion Groups
Lecture
Auditory
Practice by Doing
Reading
Demonstration
Teach Others/Make Immediate Use of Learning

50% 75% 90%

5% 10% 20% 30%
What type/s of group work do you want to do in your class?

How do you decide what will work in your class?

Types of Group work

- **Formal Groups** – established groups for a specific task. Examples: group papers, projects, presentations. Occur over several weeks or the entire semester.

- **Informal Groups** – ad hoc clusters of students during a single class. Examples: turn and talk, think-pair-share, discuss a posed question or do an assignment together in class.

- **Study Groups** – full semester groups for studying purposes. These groups support, encourage and assist the members in completing assignments and requirements for a course.
Backwards design
Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins

Learner/Learning Centered Approach

1. Learning Objectives
• achievable
• appropriate
• measurable
Start with a few Über Questions:

What are students going to get out of your course?

What will distinguish students who have taken your class from students who haven’t?

What do you want to endure beyond the final exam/final project?

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Writing Effective Learning Objectives

Achievable
Appropriate
Measurable
Fuzzy Verbs: Understand Appreciate Grasp Know Learn Believe Cover Be Familiar Comprehend

Bloom’s Taxonomy of Objectives for the Cognitive Domain

Knowledge
- Cite
- Identify
- Quote
- Count
- Indicate
- Report
- Defend
- List
- Describe
- Name
- Recognize
- Define
- State
- Draw
- Point
- Record
- Tabulate

Comprehension
- Associate
- Compare
- Describe
- Explain
- Locate
- Translate
- Differentiate
- Classify

Application
- Analyze
- Relate
- Summarize
- Use
- Interact
- Predict
- Utilize

Analysis
- Synthesize
- Evaluate
- Interpret
- Review

Synthesis
- Arrange
- Compose
- Design
- Integrate
- Program

Evaluation
- Appraise
- Determine
- Judge
- Recommend
- Test
- Assess
- Evaluate
- Score
- Critique
- Grade
- Rate
- Select
Students will gain a comprehension of constructivist teaching activities in college teaching.

Given examples and non-examples of constructivist activities in a college classroom, students will be able to accurately identify the constructivist examples and explain why each example is or isn't a constructivist activity.

Student will learn effective managerial communication strategies.
Student will learn effective managerial communication strategies.

Students should be able to formulate an effective communication strategy by selecting appropriate content, organizational structure, and media.

Write a Learning Objective or think of one you already have and write that one down....

Now – Which type of Collaborative Assignment will work for the learning objective?
Examples:

1. Walter Poleman – 40 students, Natural Resources – NR 25
2. J. Dickinson - 120 students, Anthropology 28,
3. Brian Lee – 70 students, Engineering – CE133
4. Teresa Mares – groups of 4 class of 30+ - Anthropology 185

Group Work Time

- Look at an Example
- What do you think works & what needs improvement?
  - Write down your thoughts to hand in and discuss as a larger group.

Individual Work Time

- Start writing a draft of your own assignment
- What type of collaborative assignment will it be? Formal, Informal, study group?
- How will you manage the groups, the assessment, the issues that might arise?
Follow up Support

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Types of support I can offer:

• Individual consultations
• Resource materials
• Online assistance