

Group Work

In an online environment, group work enables learners to build a rapport with each other, and it assists with building community in the course. Facilitating group work online has challenges, but and rewards.

- Provide information and structure for group assignments that build collaboration, facilitate learning objectives, and provide better learning objectives.
- Groups can be self-selected or set up by the instructor.
- Instructors and learners may find ways to meet outside of Blackboard, and should consider whether and how these might work best.
- Clarity of expectation is essential to determining how best to achieve the course objectives. Instructors should plan what is needed and expected of a group and indicate how group work will add to the learner's experience.
- Group membership must be established before an assignment or grading can be completed in Blackboard. Provide an opportunity in Group Work to have learners provide self- and peer-evaluation.
- Group work should include a self-reflective process. Learners can indicate how they feel that they contributed (or not) to the progress of the group, what would make a group work better, and how well they believe that the group did at meeting the goals of the assignment.
- When setting up group work, instructors should also consider group assessment.
 - Will each learner receive a separate grade for group work?
 - Is the group work project graded for members together?
 - Will group members evaluate each other? How so? To achieve what course objective?

Instructors will also need to determine what resources the group will need to perform the assignment and produce the deliverable. Providing the learners with the information and details at the beginning of the group project helps to reduce learner anxiety and increase learning. Providing rubrics that indicate how learners will be evaluated and providing opportunities for asking questions and/or discussing those at the beginning of the project is another best practice in which instructors can engage.

Sources and Relevant Links

- [Groups](#)
- [More detailed information on Groups](#) - Blackboard Instructor Manual, page 246