



The Nuts and Bolts of  
Group Work



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

- **Participants will be able to**
  - Identify advantages of learning groups
  - Describe spectrum of uses for groups
  - Brainstorm applications of group work for their own classroom practice



---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

- Students are less tolerant of “information dumping” lectures – they want a learning experience, not just facts
- Active learning > passive learning
- Employers want employees with human-interaction and problem-solving skills (not just content knowledge)



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL



---

---

---

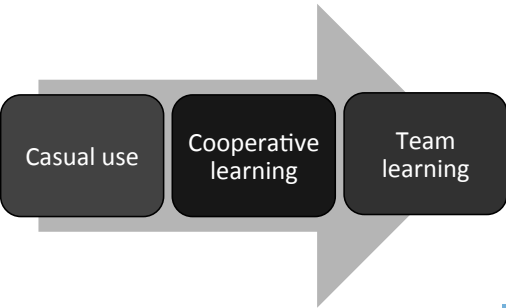
---

---


---

---

---



Casual use   Cooperative learning   Team learning



---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

Casual Use	Cooperative Learning	Team Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible, easy to use</li> <li>• Relatively ad hoc</li> <li>• Little or no advanced planning required*</li> <li>• No need to worry about grading or group composition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent use of carefully planned and structured group activities</li> <li>• Inserts small group activities into pre-existing course structure</li> <li>• Pay attention to accountability, group formation, roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making small group work the primary in-class activity</li> <li>• Procedures that support the transformation of newly formed "groups" into "high performance learning teams"</li> <li>• Often requires a change in the structure of the course</li> </ul>

Fink, L. Dee. *Beyond small groups: harnessing the extraordinary power of learning teams*.  
Used by permission of Roseanna Graham, DDS, PhD




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---


**FORMAT**

- Teacher lectures for 15-20 minutes
- Students pair with others to discuss a topic or solve an issue
- Teacher calls on students to share responses and discuss as a class

**BENEFITS/DRAWBACKS**

- Can break up tedium for class
- Adds variety and gets students active
- Little preparation
- Does not achieve a powerful form of learning

Used by permission of Roseanna Graham, DDS, PhD




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---


**FORMAT**

- Frequent structured group activities
- Advanced organization in order to plan the issues associated with individual and group accountability, how to form groups, how long to leave the groups together, whether to assign roles, etc.

**BENEFITS/DRAWBACKS**

- Does not involve a substantial change in the overall structure of the course
- Significant step from the casual use of small groups in terms of the potential for significant learning

Used by permission of Roseanna Graham, DDS, PhD




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- **Three Person Rule**  
Once you have spoken you may not make another contribution until three other people have spoken unless someone asks you directly to expand on your comment
- **Spiral Conversation**  
At the beginning of each session, once you have spoken, you do not speak again until everyone in the group has contributed
- **Talking Policy**  
Silence is allowed and does not mean you are disengaged or unintelligent. Talking frequently will not be interpreted as a sign of intelligence or extreme engagement

From the work of Stephen Brookfield

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- **Reflective Analyst:** Keeps a record of conversation development; periodically gives a summary of emerging ideas and issues
- **Devil's Advocate:** Listens for an emerging consensus and expresses a contrary view
- **Theme Spotter:** Identifies themes that are being left unexplored
- **Contextual Focuser:** Listens for comments that are unrelated to the topic at hand and makes sure group stays focused

From the work of Stephen Brookfield

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- **Detective:** Listens carefully for unacknowledged, unchecked and unchallenged biases and brings them to the group's attention
- **Scrounger:** Keeps track of helpful resources and tips from members of the group
- **Connector:** Shows how people's comments are related to one another
- **Speculator:** Introduces new ideas or interpretations ("I wonder what would happen if...")
- **Umpire:** Listens for judgmental comments that sound offensive, insulting, or in contradiction to ground rules
- **Appreciator:** Make comments indicating how she found another person's ideas interesting or useful.
- **Questioner:** Asks questions to draw out or extend what others have said

From the work of Stephen Brookfield

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

*Let's try it...*



---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

Socrates describes the prisoner being “dragged” out of the cave and into ever closer contact with the light (from the fire to the daylight to the direct sunlight), suggesting that the prisoner himself is reluctant to leave the cave. Is it just to force education upon people who would rather remain ignorant?



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- Quotes to Affirm and Challenge
- Newsprint Dialogue
- Circular Response
- Hatful of Quotes
- Snowballing

*All described in detail in your handout.*

From the work of Stephen Brookfield

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What if...	You can...
Group contributes an irrelevant idea	Acknowledge and promote relevant elements, ask for clarification of connection between topic and comments shared
Group presents vague responses	Ask for clarification and more details/ evidence to support comments
Group(s) hesitate to contribute	Recognize group's prior contributions; alter discussion topic by asking "what was surprising or confusing about the topic?" "how did this feel connected to what we've discussed previously?"
Whole group seems to have exhausted discussion	Summarize contributions by saying "So, what I've heard is.... Are we all in agreement on this? Anyone want to challenge or add to this consensus?"
Conversation doesn't begin or starts sluggishly	Clarify task; ask a student to summarize again for whole group what task is; solicit clarifying questions; remind group of time limit

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- What was one thing you realized as a result of working in your team that you would not have realized otherwise?

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

- Groups must be properly formed and managed
- Students must be made accountable for individual and group performance
- Group assignments must promote both learning and team development
- Students must have frequent and timely feedback



---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

- How do you imagine implementing today's content in your own classroom?
- What questions remain?



---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

- Leah  
lch2124@columbia.edu



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---