

Groups

Collaboration through social interaction allows students to share their personal experiences and understand those of others. Working with peers as a group enhances student motivation by increasing their personal involvement in the learning process. A Group area and Group tools provide the platform for this social interaction to take place.

The Group area provides students with a forum to meet and connect with their peers, which they may not have in a large course environment or through distance education. The Group tools allow students to communicate and collaborate effectively. The customizable space provides students with a sense of ownership within the course. The new Group tools provide instructors with more insight into individual student participation within group activities. These features will aid in creating problem-based learning exercises as well as developing constructivist learning environments.

The Group creation options are great time savers, allowing instructors to easily create and enroll students into any number of groups at one time. Instructors also can empower students to create their own groups so that they can take advantage of the robust group tools available in the absence of instructor participation or if they wish to create their own study groups.

What's New in this Release?

1. Instructors can create any number of groups at once and provide default settings and description for each group. Students can then be automatically enrolled in those groups, manually enrolled at a later date, or asked to sign-up up for a group themselves. These groups then can be managed collectively or individually.
2. Group Members can access a customizable Group area where they will communicate and collaborate with their group members using the group tools available on the page. Group assignments and notifications will be listed within the modules provided, and group material can be saved and authored collectively from this location. The Group area provides a one stop shop for group work.
3. Group Tools: Group members can create their own Discussion Board forums that allow them to conduct ongoing conversations. Group members are able to Blog thoughts and ideas for the rest of the course to comment on or add Journal entries for private reflection within the group. Group members can create Tasks to track the progress of their deliverables. These tasks can be conducted and completed by any of the members in the group.
4. Building Blocks can be group aware and made available to groups within their group area.
5. Students can create their own groups in the absence of instructor participation to take advantage of the robust group communication and collaboration tools provided. Students can provide a description of the group and limit the number of students able to enroll in the group. Instructors always have the option of modifying or restricting access to student-created groups.

Frequently Asked Questions about Groups

Where do Groups appear?

All Group areas can be accessed from a palette in the Course Menu. Each group in which the student is enrolled will be listed.

How can students collectively author and submit an assignment?

If a group member saves a file to the File Exchange tool within their group area, each of the members will have access to that file. The students then can use the communication tools to collaborate. The file then can be updated by any member of the group until it is complete. A group member then can attach the file to an Assignment and submit it. The submission will be associated automatically with each member of the group.

What is the difference between a Group and a Group Set?

A group is a collection of students. A group set is a collection of groups. Originally all of the groups within the Group set will contain the same default settings and description. Groups within a group set can then be managed in bulk or modified individually to customize the settings or description for a specific group.