CELT Teaching Tip for October 17, 2019

5 ideas to change the refrain of "I hate group work" to “what great group experiences!”

Many of us have heard student feedback about the utter disdain for group work. However, we know from the teaching and learning literature that groups, indeed diverse groups, contribute more innovative ideas than individuals working alone. So why is group work so disparaged?

A part of it may be the design of the group work. Without careful planning and facilitation, group work can frustrate students and instructors and feel like a waste of time. Use these suggestions to change the refrain of "I hate group work" to “what great group experiences!“:

- **Share your rationale for using group work.** Don’t assume that students know what the purpose is. Explicitly connect these activities to larger class themes, and learning outcomes whenever possible.

- **Group roles.** Ask students to determine before a group project the roles that each student will play. The group members working individually and then collaboratively can create job descriptions that explain what they are doing to contribute to the group. If roles are clearly defined, this will allow for greater accountability, as well as appealing to students’ desire for real-world applications of learning. Download the Sample Group Work Project Checklist (docx) ([http://bit.ly/2VKbiLc](http://bit.ly/2VKbiLc)).

- **Community building.** Devote a segment during class for groups to interact, define group norms, and explore potential challenges. Encourage this process through guided questions such as, “I would describe my communication style as...” “A successful project would be...” or "Common pitfalls for our timeline and planning, includes..." Request students to share their group norms and roles with you.

- **Checkpoints.** Separate projects into multiple "checkpoints" to present opportunities for individual learning and reflection before having students submit in their final project(s). Start the term with a low stakes project to motivate students’ engagement in group work and encourage their progress. By pooling their resources and dealing with differences of opinion that arise, groups of students can develop a more sophisticated product than they could as individuals. This is in line with making projects sufficiently complex so that students must draw on each other’s knowledge and skills.

- **Provide individualized accountability.** Dr. Rebecca Cademartiri (Materials Science and Engineering) shares a Canvas Peer Review workaround to ensure students provide quality feedback to each other. To begin, set up two assignments in Canvas. The first assignment is worth zero points, requires the Peer Review option selected (see [peer review assignment web guide](http://bit.ly/2VKbiLc)), and assigns peer reviewers automatically (view [automatically assign peers web guide](http://bit.ly/2VKbiLc)). The second, no-submission assignment serves to grade peer reviewers. After scanning the reviewers’ feedback on the first assignment (view [student peer review comments web guide](http://bit.ly/2VKbiLc)), utilize the second assignment to enter the grades for all peer reviewers. This approach will help students discover how to give valuable feedback, and reading each other’s writing will vastly improve their work before you even grade it. To see a demonstration of this, view Cademartiri’s presentation via [the CELT Online Learning Community meeting video (start at 1:12:00)](http://bit.ly/2VKbiLc).

We hope you consider these suggestions to help implement group work successfully in your course

With a joy for teaching,

Sara Marcketti, Director
Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

**CELT Faculty Spotlight: Brad Shrader**

In our teaching tips, we are highlighting the work of successful instructors and staff from across Iowa State University. We have asked them to share their highlights from the classroom, ideas for successful teaching and learning, and share their favorite CELT program.
Brad Shrader, a Morrill Professor and Eucher Fellow in Business, arrived at Iowa State University in 1984. Dr. Shrader teaches using discussion-based learning, case teaching, and case competitions. Cases are a fantastic way to involve students in discussions and to provide examples of complex concepts. Case discussion leads to discoveries, not only in teaching but also can be a form of scholarly research for presentations and publications, as well as student opportunities in external case competitions. The Ivy College of Business developed an internal case competition that serves as the integrative exercise for our resident MBA core curriculum.

**What CELT program, resource, or grant would you recommend and why?** Miller Grants. I was fortunate to receive Miller grants dealing with student involvement in collaborative learning. Over the years, our college has implemented many of the activities supported by these grants. The upcoming deadline for Miller Faculty Fellowship proposals for the 2020-21 academic year is Monday, Dec. 9. The deadline for Miller Faculty Fellowship proposals for the 2020-21 academic year is Monday, Dec. 9. Program and application details are online ([http://bit.ly/2AxshpV](http://bit.ly/2AxshpV)). Questions may be directed to CELT, [celt-miller@iastate.edu](mailto:celt-miller@iastate.edu).

Register for the 'Improving Your Online Course' Quality Matters (QM) Workshop, Nov. 6 (9 a.m.-Noon)
Participants will explore the QM Rubric and essential Specific Review Standards to provide a framework for enhancing the quality of their online courses. Participants are required to have a pre-developed online course to develop their course improvement action plan. Register through Learn@ISU website ([Learn@ISU website](http://learn.iastate.edu)), or email [celt@iastate.edu](mailto:celt@iastate.edu). Learn more on CELT’s QM at Iowa State University webpage ([http://bit.ly/isu-qm](http://bit.ly/isu-qm)).

**Learning Online: Canvas and Beyond**

**Using groups effectively in Canvas**

Review these tips to help you and your students make the most out of Canvas Groups (click on the hyperlinks to open how-to web guides).

1. Create a new group set ([http://bit.ly/33vVLRC](http://bit.ly/33vVLRC)) any time you need to shuffle group membership. This ensures students will always maintain access to their previous submissions.
2. Edit your groups ([http://bit.ly/20POjms](http://bit.ly/20POjms)) to have unique names along with the course identifier (e.g., “MIS 233: Group 1”). This step may minimize confusion for students assigned to a ‘Group 1’ in a different Canvas course.
3. Decide whether you will allow students to create their groups ([http://bit.ly/2oAFLPX](http://bit.ly/2oAFLPX)).

**Need help?**

Stop by our CELT Open Labs. visit CELT’s Canvas Open Labs webpage ([http://bit.ly/canvas-open-lab](http://bit.ly/canvas-open-lab)) for days, times, and location or contact Canvas 24/7 support by clicking on the ?Help icon on the Global Navigation menu (far left of your screen) in Canvas for the 24/7 support options.

**CELT's October Workshops**

To view our program descriptions and our most up-to-date schedule, visit CELT’s Event and Registration webpage ([http://bit.ly/celtevents](http://bit.ly/celtevents)):

- Seminar, Service-Learning Teaching and Learning Community, Oct. 23 (11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.)
- Workshop, Navigating controversial topics in the classroom, Oct. 29 (4:10-5 p.m.)
- Initiative Opens, #CyThx at Iowa State University (Nov. 1-30)
- Seminar, Discuss Published Education Research in Your Discipline, Nov. 4 (4:10-5 p.m.)
- Workshop: Improving Your Online Course, Nov 6 (9 a.m.-Noon)
- Workshop, Documenting Your Teaching using the DART Matrix, Nov. 12 (2:10-3 p.m.)
- Workshop, Exploring ways to create an inclusive learning environment, Nov. 12 (4:10-5 p.m.)
- Workshop, Effectively managing disruptive conduct in learning spaces, Nov. 14 (12:10-1 p.m.)
- Seminar, ISU Online Learning Community (ISU-OLC), Nov. 15 (11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.)
- Workshop, Discover the top 10 tips for creating accessible course content, Nov. 19 (4:10-5 p.m.)
- Seminar, Service-Learning Teaching and Learning Community, Nov. 20 (11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.)
- Meeting, Team-Based Learning (TBL) Teaching and Learning Community, Nov. 22 (1:10-2:30 p.m.)

**How to Register**
For in-person events, register via the Learn@ISU website (http://learn.iastate.edu), or email your name, department, name of the event, date of the event to celt@iastate.edu. Many of our workshops are available in-person and/or online via Zoom. If it's offered online via Zoom, registration will be a part of the ISU Event Calendar entry.