

Group Learning

- Use a “lottery” each week so the students get an opportunity to work with the entire class rather than in a small “elitist” group where students usually gravitate into groups.
- Put students in groups. Assign a task such as write sentences with noun clauses. Groups write responses on transparencies. The class checks transparencies and corrects errors.
- I like to form groups of 3-5 students for lab work. I get them to fill out a brief questionnaire, and then form my groups always trying to balance strengths and weaknesses. It is especially good to have a “good with numbers” person in each group.
- Assign group assignment based on individual learning styles/multiple intelligences (use their strengths).
- Handout w/questions – Review sheet. Each group member answer one part/question – Share with each other.
- Give student charts/diagrams with blank spaces. Each member fills one in and passes to next group member.
- Encourage groupings based on diversity in skills – good note taker, good reporter, good analytical/critical thinker, good moderator/time keeper.
- Students take an assessment. They are either an organizer, thinker, adventurer, or giver. I try to make sure there is a representative in each group.
- Peer review of student drafts in composition classes –
 - * Set up and distribute list of items to be discussed and evaluated in the peer session.
 - * Use a sample paper to model the process.
 - * Follow with a de-briefing of the activity.
- I vary the seating “layout” – move desks into circle, small groups, smaller circle of chairs within larger group to shake up the dynamics or comfort zone for students. We discuss why and how this restructuring was used – as well as a content driven activity.
- I hide a \$5 bill in class. Students get to question me (Y/N). The student who locates the \$ gets it. The point is – Questioning/Investigating.
- For group to be effective, students need to be told and to see in writing why collaborative learning at this particular moment is a good idea and need to be told that there’s going to be a practical use for the activity. Give individual participants in each group specific tasks.
- Short lectures followed by small group discussion and report. Empower students to choose – time, assessment, attendance (allow them to choose excellence)
- I create and distribute a test made up of selected wrong answers from student tests. Before I go over the wrong answers, small groups grade an assigned problem or two and comment on it/them to the entire class.
- Make all directions for group work very specific (put in writing).

- The activity ought to ask students to make a group decision on the most important concept, or the correct answer, or the most difficult idea, or an analogy for a concept.
- Figure out a “puzzle” independently. Then pair and discuss and then as a group examine difference in learning and different perceptions.
- Persuasive – Give a topic and side, have small group organize argument. Other groups ask questions of points. Review: What was difficult to argue? – What did you need to be more convincing?
- Have someone from the group write their work on the board. Have another (the other) member of the group explain orally. If there is a third member of the group, have that person answer questions from the rest of the class. The teacher chooses who does which job as she/he calls on the group to present their solution.
- Assign different roles to students.
- “Jigsaw” groups: Begin in an original group of, say, four students. Each student is given a different problem. Then students shuffle to a new group where everyone has the same problem. Then they must go back to the original group and each student explains his/her problem to the group.
- Have assigned roles – Facilitator/Scribe – and rotate the roles, but keep groups the same.
- Two minute conversations to process anything presented/experienced in a class. Have pairs become fours (if desired) – Report outcomes and write on board
- Have group members assign grades to individual members in proportion to their contribution to the success of the group project
- Group activity to learn 20 vocabulary words in 2 weeks (Jigsaw) – Divide the words by the number of students in the group ($20 \div 5$ students = 4 words each). Each student is responsible for teaching the 4 words to their group in such a fashion that the group will always remember it. The group works together 10 min/class. After 2 weeks, the words are learned as demonstrated by quiz.
- Cooperative grouping is an explicitly encouraged activity that is explained in the beginning of the year and is done at least once a week in my classes. Students know that the group is expected to present the product of their collaboration to the whole group. Examples: (1) Have students complete their assignment on an overhead transparency for presentation and award lollipops or kisses as prizes. (2) Student groups have to put together sentences from a paragraph that have been cut up – reinforces main idea and sequencing as well as patterns or organization.
- I know their learning styles from an inventory done in the first 2 weeks. Allow students time to work alone first to answer the question and write down their answers. Then put them in groups that you have selected ahead of time. Be sure to have a variety of learning styles. First choose a leader by doing yes, no, or maybe. Then choose a recorder using yes, no, or maybe. Then reporter – then time keeper. This beginning gets all involved. Then have them share what they wrote and come up with a common list. Leader takes over; recorder writes; reporter will report out. On reporting out, ask if anyone else wants to add.
- Make the group hand in the results or put them on the board – Can be a competition with points for the group who gets the correct answers on the board the fastest.

- Prizes (competition!); Contest = Jeopardy; Clear instructions; Fun.
- The students are randomly divided. They randomly select a multiple intelligence to present. They are given time parameters. They are told that they will all receive the same grade. They are told that they will be evaluated by their peers and members of their group. They are encouraged to be creative and use personal talents. They are told to have fun.
Examples: Bodily – Kinesthetic (Electric slide)
 Musical (Student played guitar)
 Verbal (Jeopardy)
- My peer reviews of student writing follow the following procedure:
 - a. Students bring multiple copies of a paper to be reviewed
 - b. The writer distributes the copies and reads his/her paper aloud
 - c. The reviewers answer a set of teacher-prepared questions about the paper in writing
 - d. The reviewers and the writer discuss the paper
 - e. After everyone is done, the group selects the best paper
 - f. The best paper is read aloud to the class
 - g. The instructor comments