

# How to Use Groups Effectively

# Groups in Canvas

Many studies show that peers teaching each other is an effective learning strategy. When using groups in Canvas, a mini-course will automatically be generated for each group, which allows students a space for a collaboration online.

# Within groups, students can . . .

Canvas generates a mini-course that's accessible for each group. Within their courses, students can

- Store and share files / notes
- Start a discussion
- Send emails using the Inbox feature
- Create their own groups

## Within groups, instructors can . . .

- View all activity within all groups
- Assign group leaders
- Move students to different subgroups
- Create group collaborations

In essence, you can do whatever you need to do to ensure students are getting the most out of their groups. Nothing is really out of your control.

# When would you use groups?

When thinking about your course, groups may be helpful if you're considering:

- Semester-long projects
- Study sessions
- Large course

# When would you use groups?

Here are some specific situations you might use groups.

- Group projects or assignments
- Large class (breaking up students can be more manageable)
- Assign students a problem to solve as a group and post answer in Discussion Board
- Peer teaching!
- Helps students craft collaboration skills, useful in the real world
- Study groups

# Best Practice for Using Groups

- Clear directions, perhaps preliminary deadlines to keep them on track
  - Creating a grading rubric
  - Possible reflection on group performance (confidential evaluations)
  - Consider grading both the group and individual
- Be transparent about why you want them to work in groups. It'd help students know what to look for in their learning experience
- Assigning roles (and even rotating roles for each assignment)

# References

[Community.canvaslms.com](https://community.canvaslms.com)

- An amazing resource for your Canvas questions

<https://sps.northwestern.edu/distance-learning/how-do-i/student-interaction/interaction-guides.php>