

COURSELINK GROUPS TOOL

Getting started with CourseLink Series

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

While we are coming together today in a virtual space, it is important to recognize the physical space that connects us and brings us together. The University of Guelph and its campuses are situated on the treaty lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We understand that these lands are connected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum and continue to be home to diverse communities of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. By acknowledging the land, we reaffirm our commitment to decolonization and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and our responsibility to the land on which we live, learn, and play.



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AGENDA

- **Benefits of Group Work**
- **Groups Tool Basics**
 - Categories vs. Groups
 - Category Types
- **Creating CourseLink Groups**
- **How Groups Interacts with Other CourseLink Tools:**
 - Groups and Discussions
 - Groups and Dropbox
- **Additional Support Options for Groups**
- **Question & Answer Period**

BENEFITS OF GROUP WORK

WHY GROUP WORK?

- A common remark from students when group work projects are assigned is “can I do this on my own”?
- Students (and instructors) often remember the negative experiences they have had with group work rather than the positive experiences
- However, group projects that are well designed, well supervised, and properly assessed can have a host of benefits for students AND instructors

BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

While some students may be apprehensive about group work, well-designed opportunities provide benefits such as:

- Developing important work-relevant skills such as planning & time management, collaboration, communication skills, etc.
- The ability to explore more complex problems that would be more challenging individually
- Gaining insight into their own strengths and weaknesses

Positive group experiences support student learning, retention, and overall success in higher education.

BENEFITS FOR INSTRUCTORS

Well designed group assignments can also provide benefits to instructors, such as:

- Providing students with more complex & authentic problems to work on
- Allowing several students to select the same topic of interest when providing a limited pool of topics
- Reducing instructional team grading time (e.g., 50 students in groups of 5 = 10 projects to grade)

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL GROUP WORK

Consider the following when planning for group work:

- Explain to students why group work is important for the assignment
- Consider scaffolding group work to help students develop their skills before the most challenging work
- Consider defining roles for group work (e.g., scribe, spokesperson, fact checker, organizer, timekeeper, etc.)
- Set expectations around the work and provide suggestions on how to resolve group conflict
- Encourage student reflection at the end of the group work process

GROUPS TOOL BASICS

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WHAT IS THE COURSELINK GROUPS TOOL?

- A means to subdivide your students into smaller groups within CourseLink to:
 - Submit group assignments (Dropbox)
 - Communicate asynchronously (Discussions, email)
- The number of students in a group and the total number of groups is determined by the instructor in the group category settings
- Unfortunately, there is no true shared group workspace, like MS Teams, in CourseLink for students

GROUP CATEGORIES VS. GROUPS

Group Categories

- Containers for related groups (e.g., Assignment 1 Groups)
- Settings selected for the group category will determine the number of groups created within it
- Once a group category is saved, its type cannot be changed

Groups

- Must belong to a category & contain student memberships
- A group name can be altered at any time by an instructor/TA
- Group enrolments can be automatic, manual, or self-enrol
- It is possible for a student to belong to more than one group in a category, though not usually recommended

GROUP CATEGORY TYPES AND SETTINGS

Group Categories vs. Groups

View Categories

Number of Group - Auto Enrol

Email Delete

<input type="checkbox"/>	Groups	Members	Dropbox	Discussions	Locker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Group - Auto Enrol (4)				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group 1	0			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group 2	0			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group 3	0			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group 4	0			

Group Category (container)

Groups (within the category)

GROUP CATEGORY TYPES

There are 7 distinct group category types:

1. # of Groups
2. # of Groups – No Auto Enrolments
3. # of Groups – Self Enrolment
4. # of Groups, Capacity of # - Self Enrolment
5. Groups of #
6. Groups of # – Self Enrolment
7. Single user, member-specific groups

We will focus on the 3 most used category types today.

GROUP CATEGORY TYPE: # OF GROUPS

How does # of Groups work?

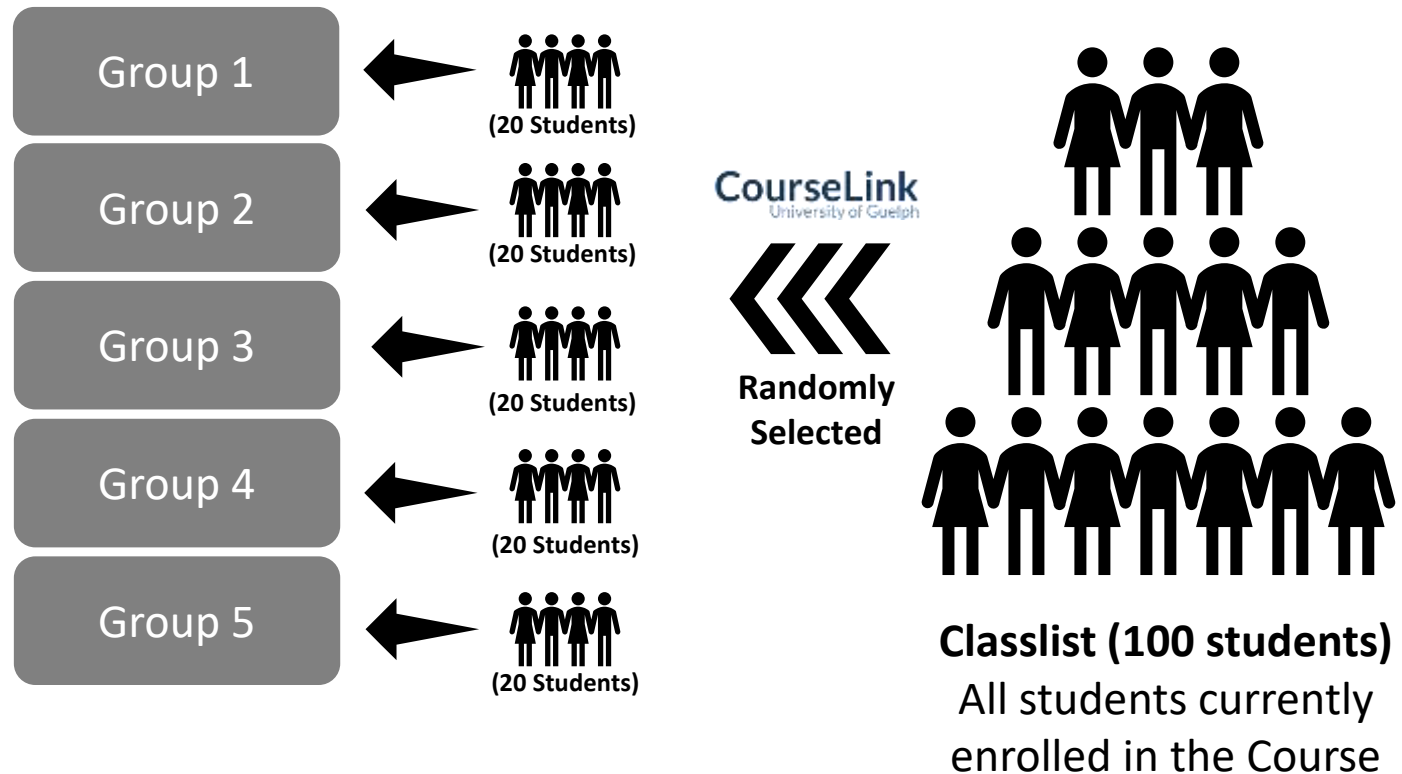
- You define the number of groups required & CourseLink automatically assigns students randomly to those groups

When to use # of Groups?

- Whenever you know the **exact** number of groups required and you **do not** need to manually enrol students into specific groups or cap the number of students per group
- The most common use case for this enrollment type is for groups that will be used for group-restricted discussions
- Another common use is for dividing the class for assessment purposes in team taught courses

GROUP CATEGORY TYPE: # OF GROUPS

Example: 5 groups, 100 students



GROUP CATEGORY TYPE:

OF GROUPS, CAPACITY OF # - SELF ENROLMENT

How does # of Groups, Capacity of # - Self Enrolment work?

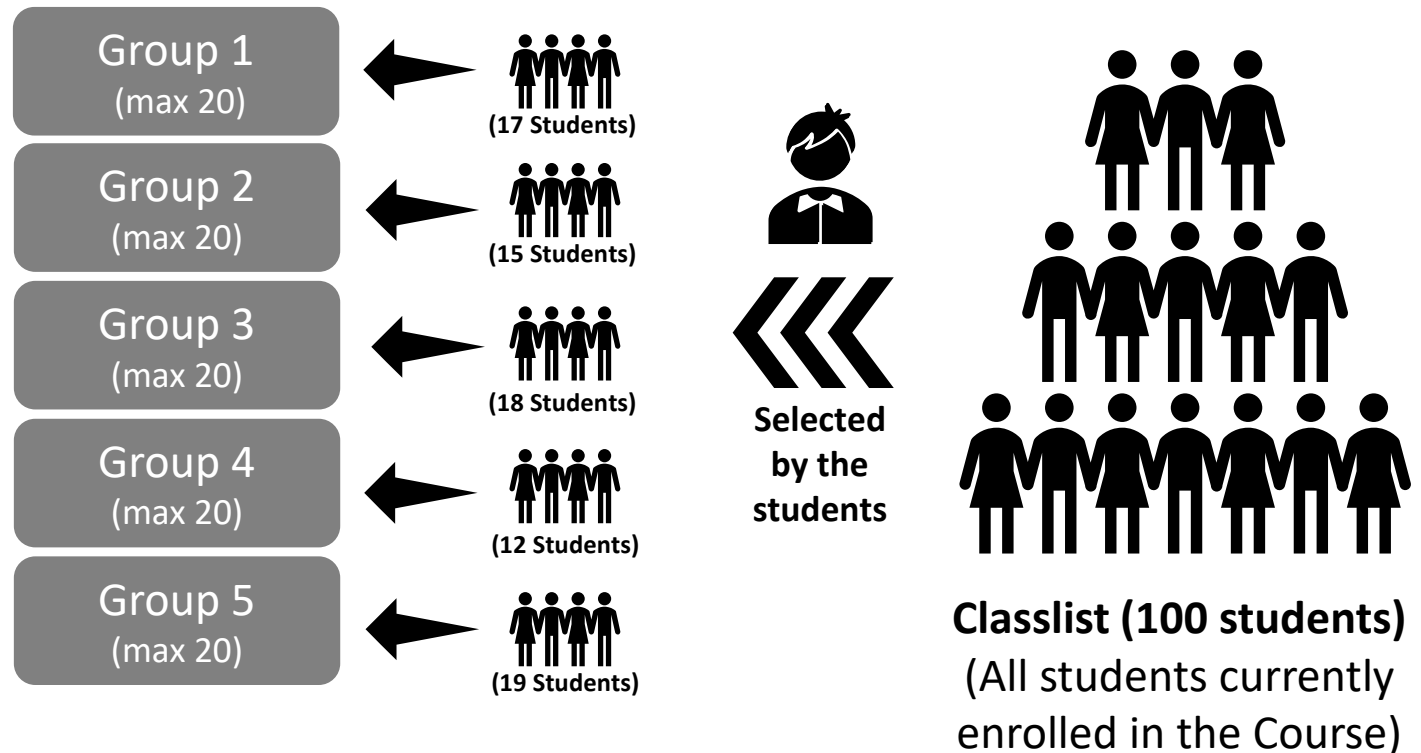
- You define the number of groups required **AND** the maximum number of students each group can have
 - If you have 50 students and want 10 groups, you must set the capacity to at least 5 to ensure all students can find a group
- Students see a list of available groups, the current number of students in the groups, and can enrol in any that are not yet full
- Includes an option to auto-enrol students in groups who have not selected a group as of a specific date and time!

When to use # of Groups, Capacity of # - Self Enrolment?

- This is the most common choice for self-enrolment groups due to the inclusion of both a group number cap and an enrolment cap
- There are several use cases, however some more common ones include presentation date selection and limited topic selection

GROUP CATEGORY TYPE: # OF GROUPS, CAPACITY OF # - SELF ENROLMENT

Example: 100 students, 5 groups, capacity 20 per group



19 students have not selected a group.

Using the “Allocate unenrolled users after Self Enrollment Expiry Date” option fills the groups.

GROUP CATEGORY TYPE: GROUPS OF

How does Groups of # work?

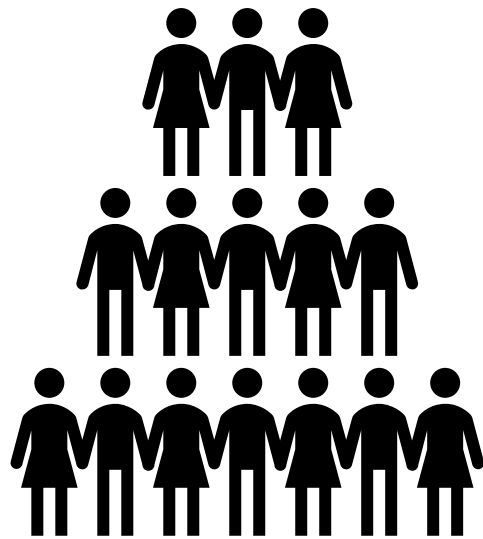
- You set the number of students you would like to have in each group
- CourseLink creates the required number of groups and randomly assigns students to those groups (based on the current Classlist)

When to use Groups of #?

- Whenever you **require a hard cap** on the number of students per group and want CourseLink to assign students to groups
- A common use case would be any group work that requires a specific number of students to fill specific roles (note taker, presenter, researcher, etc.)
- Best used when registrations are stable (i.e. after the add period)

GROUP CATEGORY TYPE: GROUPS OF

Example: Groups of 20, 100 students

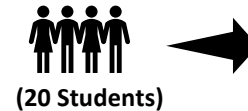
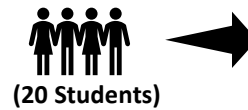


Classlist (100 students)
All students currently
enrolled in the Course

CourseLink
University of Guelph



**20 students
per group
(Randomly
Selected)**



Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

Group 4

Group 5

CREATING COURSELINK GROUPS

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WHERE TO FIND COURSELINK'S GROUPS TOOL

- **Groups** is one of the default tools available on the CourseLink navigation bar

Course Home Content **Groups** Dropbox Discussions Grades Course Admin CourseLink Help

- It can also be accessed from the **Course Admin** link

Course Home Content Groups Dropbox Discussions Grades **Course Admin** CourseLink Help

Learner Management

 Attendance

 Class Progress

 Classlist

 **Groups**

CREATING A NEW GROUP CATEGORY

- Begin by clicking on the **New Category** button

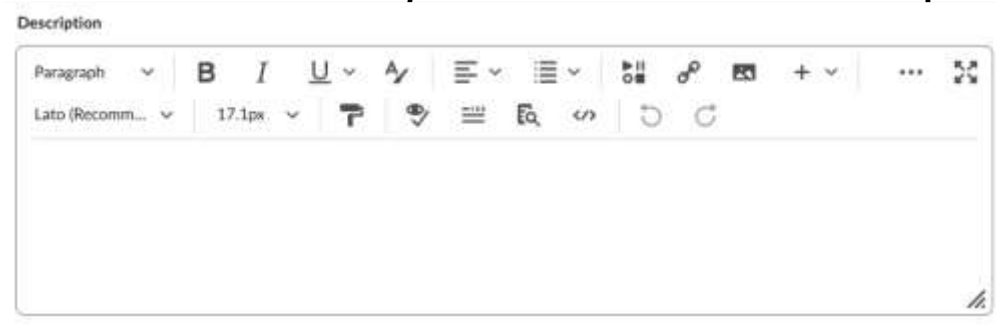


- Next provide a name for the category (students will see this name, so select something that makes sense)

A screenshot of a web form titled "New Category". Below the title is the heading "Category Information". There is a text input field labeled "Category Name *". The input field contains the text "Discussion Groups". A red rectangular box highlights the entire "Category Name" field area.

CREATING A NEW GROUP CATEGORY

- Next you will have the *option* to enter a description



A screenshot of a rich text editor interface. The title bar reads "Description". The toolbar includes options for Paragraph, Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), Text Color (A), List, Indent, Bulleted List, Link, Unlink, Insert, and a plus sign. Below the toolbar, the font is set to "Lato (Recomm...)" and the size is "17.1px". There are also icons for Paragraph, Bulleted List, Search, Undo, and Redo. The main area is a large empty text box.

- Descriptions are automatically visible to students for self-enrolment categories (can be enabled for other types)

Groups	Description	Members	Actions
	Paper Topic Selection Please select the group that corresponds to the topic you are selecting for your paper. Once selected you cannot change your topic.		
Automobiles		0	Join Group
Planes		0	Join Group
Trains		0	Join Group

CREATING A NEW GROUP CATEGORY

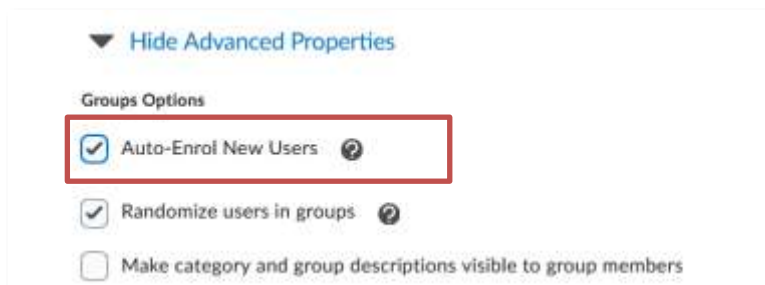
- Next, select 1 of the 7 group category enrolment types



The screenshot shows a dropdown menu titled "Enrolment Type". The selected option is "# of Groups - No Auto Enrolments". Other options listed include "Groups of #", "# of Groups", "Groups of # - Self Enrolment", "# of Groups - Self Enrolment", "# of Groups, Capacity of # - Self Enrolment", and "Single user, member-specific groups".

Note: Once you save the group category this option cannot be changed!

- The rest of the options will vary depending on which enrolment type is selected
 - Tip: If selecting an auto-enrolment type, enable **Auto-Enrol New Users** under **Advanced Properties**



The screenshot shows the "Groups Options" section under "Hide Advanced Properties". The "Auto-Enrol New Users" checkbox is checked and highlighted with a red box. Other options include "Randomize users in groups" (checked) and "Make category and group descriptions visible to group members" (unchecked).

DEMO TIME!

- I will demonstrate how to create the 3 group category enrolment types discussed:
 - # of Groups
 - # of Groups, Capacity of # - Self Enrolment
 - Groups of #
- I will also showcase the unique options for each of these group category enrolment types

GROUPS AND DISCUSSIONS

How Groups Interacts with Other CourseLink Tools



COURSELINK DISCUSSIONS TOOL

- Found on every course site's default navigation bar
- Discussions are asynchronous
 - Students may create threads and post replies during any time when a forum/topic is available on your course site
- Forms/topics can be locked (preventing new posts) as of a certain date/time
- Posts to discussion topics can be assessed

GROUPS & THE DISCUSSION TOOL

- A single discussion topic can be created in the Discussions tool that is **group-restricted** and only allows students in the same group to communicate

Group Restriction - Single Topic ▾

Topic	Threads	Posts	Last Post
Group Restriction - Single Topic ▾			
 Group/section restrictions. Everyone can access this topic, but students only see threads from their own group.	2	2 (2)	 CourseLink Student 01 yesterday at 2:47 PM

GROUPS & THE DISCUSSION TOOL

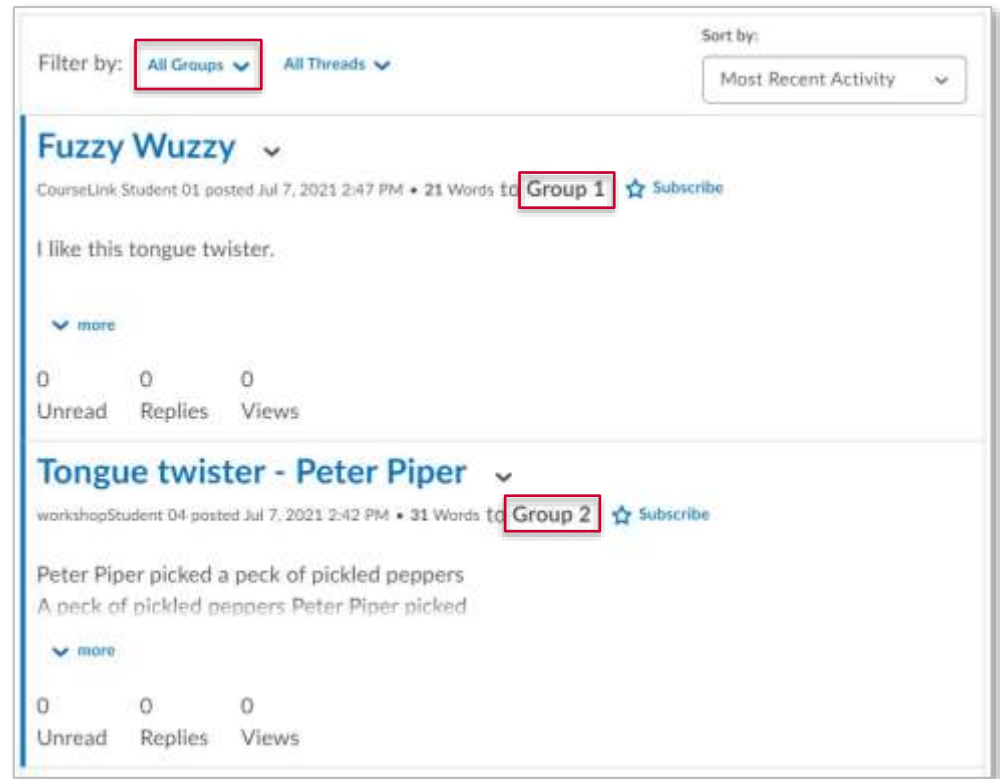
- **Students** only see posts from other members of their own group
- Members of Group 1 see threads and replies from other members of Group 1, but not from members of Group 2, Group 3, etc.

The screenshot displays a discussion tool interface with the following elements:

- Filter by:** All Threads (dropdown)
- Sort by:** Most Recent Activity (dropdown)
- Thread 1:** "Looking for a study buddy" by CourseLink Student 03, posted Dec 5, 2022 1:54 PM. It has 0 unread, 0 replies, and 0 views. The recipient is "Group 1".
- Thread 2:** "Hello Group Memebers" by CourseLink Student 01, posted Nov 19, 2020 4:49 PM. It has 1 unread, 1 reply, and 1 view. The recipient is "Group 1". The text includes a placeholder: "Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore". It also shows "Last post 1 minute ago by CourseLink Student 02".
- Thread 3:** "Groups discussion topic!" by CourseLink Student 02, posted Dec 5, 2022 1:53 PM. It has 0 unread, 0 replies, and 0 views. The recipient is "Group 1".

GROUPS & THE DISCUSSION TOOL

- **Instructors/TAs** see all the posts from all students in all groups
- Each thread shows the associated group
- A filter option allows viewing of posts from a specific group



A group-restricted topic can also be associated with a single grade item and used for assessment!

WHEN TO USE GROUP DISCUSSIONS?

When to consider group-restricted discussion topics:

1. Within a larger course to break the students up into smaller groups for discussion.
 - *E.g.*, 20 students in 10 discussion topics rather than 200 students in 1 discussion topic
2. When sets of students are discussing different/unique topics
3. To create a group workspace for a presentation or project
4. To replicate individual student blogs

DEMO TIME!

- In this demo I will:
 - Showcase how to create a Group-restricted discussion using an existing group

GROUPS AND DROPBOX

How Groups Interacts with Other CourseLink Tools

COURSELINK DROPBOX TOOL

- Allows the instructor to create folders where students can submit assignments for assessment
- Most often used to accept Word documents or PDF files
- Each folder can have a specific name and due date
- Students submit their files to the folder and receive a confirmation email
- Instructors/TAs can access the submissions to perform assessments (rubrics, annotations, comments, etc.)
- Folders can be set for individual submission or **group submission** (using groups from the Groups tool)

GROUP SUBMISSION DROPBOX FOLDERS

What is a Group Dropbox Folder?

- A Dropbox folder that accepts submission from a student on behalf of their entire group (defined by the Groups tool)
- One Dropbox folder can be connected to one CourseLink group category
- When instructors/TAs evaluate the group's submission, all group members receive the same score & feedback
- Any adjustments to individual student grades within a group must occur manually via the associated grade item

GROUP SUBMISSION DROPBOX FOLDERS

When should you use a Group Submission Dropbox Folder?

- Anytime you have a submission-based (file submission) group assignment where students are working in groups that are created through the CourseLink Groups tool
- Group submission Dropbox folders also offer non-submission-based options (observed in person, on paper submission) to more easily assess group work
- In both cases it is important to note that **all students in the group receive the same score and feedback**

DEMO TIME!

- In this demo I will:
 - Explain how to create a group submission Dropbox folder using an existing group
 - Show how group submissions work for students

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR GROUPS

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SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR GROUPS

Online Resources

- OpenEd Documentation & Support - Groups:
<https://support.opened.uoguelph.ca/instructors/courselink/tools/content/groups>
 - Includes several tutorial videos from D2L

CourseLink Support

- Email: courselink@uoguelph.ca
- Phone: x.56939

Instructional Technology Specialist (ITS) team

- Request a consultation: <https://bit.ly/UG-ITS-Consult>
- Email: insttech@uoguelph.ca

RESOURCES

Burke, A. (2011) Group work: how to use groups effectively. *The Journal of Effective Teaching* 11(2): 87-95,
https://uncw.edu/jet/articles/vol11_2/burke.pdf

Eberly Center (n.d.) *What are the benefits of group work?*
<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/instructionalstrategies/groupprojects/benefits.html>

University of Waterloo Center for Teaching Excellence (n.d.) *Implementing group work in the classroom.* <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/alternatives-lecturing/group-work/implementing-group-work-classroom>