GET A GRIP ON GROUPS

Exploring CourseLink’s Groups tool & how it works with other tools

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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.
AGENDA

• Benefits of Group Work
• Overview of CourseLink Group Category Settings and Types
• Groups and Discussions
• Groups and Dropbox
• Groups and Restrictions/Release Conditions
• Groups and Grades
• Where to Get Support
• Q&A
BENEFITS OF GROUP WORK
Another Group Project?

- A common remark when group work or 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.
- Group projects that are well designed, well supervised, and well assessed can have a host of benefits for students AND instructors.
Benefits to Students

While 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.
• Tackling more complex problems that would be more challenging individually,
• Stimulating creativity,
• Gaining insight into their own strengths and weaknesses.

Overall, positive group experiences support student learning, retention, and overall success in higher education.
BENEFITS FOR INSTRUCTORS

Group work may be appropriate in specific cases and provide instructors with benefits:

• The ability to provide students with more complex & authentic problems to work on (two heads are better than one)
• Useful when the number of topics is limited
• May reduce instructional team grading time*

However, instructors may also find an increase in time spent managing and coordinating group work.
TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL GROUP WORK

Consider the following when planning for group work:

• Explain to students why group work is important for this project/case study/etc.
• 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 how to resolve group conflict
• Encourage student reflection at the end of the group work process
OVERVIEW OF COURSELINK GROUP CATEGORY SETTINGS AND TYPES
**GROUP CATEGORY TYPES AND SETTINGS**

Group Categories vs. Groups

- **Group Categories**
  - A container for a series of groups
  - Settings selected for the group category will determine the number of groups created within it
  - Once created, a group category’s enrolment type is saved and cannot be changed

- **Groups**
  - Belong to a category and contain student enrolments
  - A group name can be altered at any time
  - Group enrolments can be made/altered
  - 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Dropbox</th>
<th>Discussions</th>
<th>Locker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Group 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Groups (within a category)
GROUP CATEGORY TYPES AND SETTINGS

Group Category Settings
• Restrict Enrollments To
  – This advanced feature lets you restrict enrolments to groups in the category to only students who belong to a specific section or to another group from another category
  – For example, you may only want groups formed in a category from students in section 01, so that they can connect in-class
GROUP CATEGORY TYPES AND SETTINGS

Group Category Settings

• Group Prefix
  – Change the default label for groups that are created by CourseLink
  – For example, if you set it to “Topic”, the groups in that category would be created as Topic 1, Topic 2, Topic 3 instead of Group 1, Group 2, Group 3
GROUP CATEGORY TYPES AND SETTINGS

Group Category Settings

- Auto-Enrol New Users
  - Available for all auto-enrolment type group categories but is **not** enabled by default
  - Can be enabled when creating/editing a category
  - Ensures that any late adds to the course are assigned a group
  - We typically recommend enabling it
GROUP CATEGORY TYPES AND SETTINGS

Group Category Settings

• Create Workspaces
  – When creating groups, you may choose to set up other tools that use the groups at the same time.
  – You can create a group Dropbox folder, a group-restricted discussion topic, or a group locker (for file sharing).
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

Groups offers 7 distinct enrollment types for group categories:

1. # of Groups – Self Enrolment
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

Each enrollment type has various considerations and use cases.
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

# of Groups
- 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 in team taught courses.
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

# of Groups Example: 5 groups, 100 students

- Group 1 (20 Students)
- Group 2 (20 Students)
- Group 3 (20 Students)
- Group 4 (20 Students)
- Group 5 (20 Students)

Classlist (100 students)
All students currently enrolled in the Course
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

# of Groups – No Auto Enrolments
Define the number of groups required, but enrolments of students into those groups will be performed manually (by the instructor or TA)

When to use # of Groups – No Auto Enrolments
- Whenever you know the exact number of groups required and you must manually enrol students into specific groups
- The most common use case is for groups formed in class, where groups are providing you their members on paper or over email
- Note in large courses adding students to groups can be difficult as it is a manual process that involves a matrix of checkboxes
  - CourseLink support can help if you provide them a paired list in an Excel or CSV file:
    Group 1, owooding@uoguelph.ca
    Group 1, cacreigh@uoguelph.ca
    Group 2, rcouto@uoguelph.ca
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

# of Groups – No Auto Enrolments Example: 100 students, 5 groups

Group 1
(((25 Students)))

Group 2
(((19 Students)))

Group 3
(((19 Students)))

Group 4
(((18 Students)))

Group 5
(((20 Students)))

Selected by the Instructor

Classlist
(All students currently enrolled in the Course)
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

# of Groups – Self Enrolment

- Define the number of groups required and let students select the group in which they want to enrol

When to use # of Groups – Self Enrolment

- Whenever you know the exact number of groups required and you are assigning students the task of selecting their own group, but do not want to cap the number of students per group
- The most common use is as a sign-up sheet for topics where you do not need to limit the number of student per topic
- All self enrollment group categories allow you to set an availability window to enrol and have the option to auto-enrol students that have not selected a group at the end of that window
- In most cases you will want to use # of Groups, Capacity of # - Self Enrolment instead (we will look at this type shortly)
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

# of Groups – Self Enrolment Example: 100 students, 5 groups

No Cap on Student Enrolments

- Group 1: (45 Students)
- Group 2: (10 Students)
- Group 3: (18 Students)
- Group 4: (22 Students)
- Group 5: (15 Students)

Selected by the students

Classlist
(All students currently enrolled in the Course)
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

# of Groups, Capacity of # - Self Enrolment
• 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

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 ENROLLMENT TYPES**

# of Groups, Capacity of # - Self Enrolment Example: 100 students, 5 groups, cap 20

- **Group 1** (max 20)
- **Group 2** (max 20)
- **Group 3** (max 20)
- **Group 4** (max 20)
- **Group 5** (max 20)

Selected by the students

Classlist (100 students)
(All students currently enrolled in the Course)
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

Groups of #
• 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

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 ENROLLMENT TYPES**

Groups of # Example: Groups of 20, 100 students

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

- **CourseLink**
  - Randomly Selected

- **Group 1**
  - (20 Students)

- **Group 2**
  - (20 Students)

- **Group 3**
  - (20 Students)

- **Group 4**
  - (20 Students)

- **Group 5**
  - (20 Students)
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

Groups of # – Self Enrolment
• Set the number of students each group should have and let the students select
• The number of groups is determined by the number of students in your course at the time of creation and is not dynamic
  – If several students join the course after the initial groups are created, you will need to manually create new groups in the category to accommodate them
  – Best used when registrations are stable (i.e. after the add period)

When to use Groups of # – Self Enrolment
• The most common use would be any scenario where students are picking groups to determine an option, for example topic sign-up sheets, presentation times, etc.
• In most cases, the # of Groups, Capacity of # - Self Enrolment will be the preferable option as you get to cap both the number of groups and number of students per group
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

Groups of # - Self Enrolment Example: Groups of 20, 100 students

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

Selected by the students

Group 1
(30 Students)
Group 2
(25 Students)
Group 3
(15 Students)
Group 4
(10 Students)
Group 5
(20 Students)

No Cap on Student Enrolments
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

Single user, member-specific groups
• Create groups of 1, where each student is the only member of their group
• Groups use the students’ names, rather than a group number

When to use Groups of # – Single user, member-specific groups
• This is a very niche group category enrollment type
• When new students join the course, a new group is created for them
• The most common use would be to create group-restricted discussion topics that are only available the student and the instructor/TA
  – Often used as a reflection blog or as a communication channel in small courses (i.e. grade level seminar)
GROUP CATEGORY ENROLLMENT TYPES

Single user, member-specific groups Example: 10 students

Classlist (10 students)
All students currently enrolled in the Course

Auston Matthews
Mitch Marner
John Tavares
Barbara Underhill
Morgan Reilly

Hayley Wickenheiser
Danielle Goyette
William Nylander
Sheldon Keefe
Kyle Dubas

Each student gets their own group with their name as the group name
GROUPS AND DISCUSSIONS
COURSELINK DISCUSSIONS TOOL

The Basics on the Discussion Tool

• Found on every course site’s default navigation bar
• The tool is popular and thus very familiar to many students
• Discussions are asynchronous by nature
  – 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 as of a certain date/time, leaving the existing posts accessible but preventing new posts
• Discussions can be assessed holistically (a single score for all posts in a topic) or individually (each post gets a separate score and the average score is typically used for the grade)
WHEN TO USE GROUP DISCUSSIONS?

Discussions can work with the Groups tool to restrict access to a discussion topic to a specific group of students, for example:

1. Within a larger course to break the students up into smaller groups for discussion.
   - *i.e.*, 200 students in 1 discussion versus 20 students in 10 discussions
2. When students are discussing different/unique topics
3. To create a group workspace for a presentation or project
4. To replicate individual student blogs
GROUP DISCUSSION – SINGLE TOPIC

- Each thread shows which group it is part of
- Instructor/TA can filter thread by group name
GROUP DISCUSSION – MULTIPLE TOPICS

Each group receives its own topic within the forum.

Open topic. Restriction created using 'Group and section restrictions' within the Restrictions tab.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Threads</th>
<th>Posts</th>
<th>Last Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>CourseLink Student 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>yesterday at 2:48 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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GROUP RESTRICTIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS

Which type of discussion should I use?

1. Single Topic
   - Simple, easy to create
   - Recommended format for most use cases
   - Best option for assessed discussion (1 topic → 1 grade item)

2. Multiple Topics
   - Take more time and effort to create
   - Generally not recommended, unless you have a reason to restrict access for a period of time before opening up the topic to all students
**SPECIAL CASE – INDIVIDUAL STUDENT BLOGS**

- CourseLink does not have a specific blogging tool
- Some instructors use 3rd party tools, but others have “hacked” the discussions tool to create a viable supported alternative
- Solution
  - Single user, member-specific groups

![Image of a blog interface with two postings]
GROUPS AND DROPBOX
GROUP DROPBOX FOLDERS

What is a Group Dropbox Folder?

- A Dropbox folder that accepts submission from a group of students
- One Dropbox folder can be connected to one CourseLink group category
- Any student from the group can submit files to the folder on behalf of their group
- When evaluating the submission, all students in the group receive the same score and feedback
- Any adjustments to individual student grades within a group must occur directly via the attach grade item
GROUP Dropbox Folders

When should I use a Group Dropbox Folder?

• Anytime you have a submission-based group assignment where you will have students working in groups that are created through the CourseLink Groups tool

• You may also choose to use a Dropbox folder with one of the non submission options (observed in person, on paper submission) to more easily assess group work where all students in the group will receive the same score
GROUP DROPBOX FOLDERS

How to create a Group Dropbox Folder

• Be sure you have first created the group category in the groups tool

• If you are ready to create the group Dropbox folder when you are creating the group category, you may use the create workspace option

• If you are creating the group Dropbox folder after groups are created, simply select “Group Assignment” from the Submission & Completion menu (new experience), or from the Submission, Completion and Categorization section of the Properties tab in the old experience
GROUP DROPBOX FOLDERS

How to create a Group Dropbox folder (New Experience)

• Create the group Dropbox folder (after groups are created)
• Select “Group Assignment” from the Submission & Completion menu
• Select the group category to connect with the Dropbox folder
**GROUP DROPBOX FOLDERS**

How to create a Group Dropbox folder (Old Experience)

- Create the group Dropbox folder (after groups are created)
- Select “Group Assignment” from the Submission, Completion and Categorization section of the Properties tab
- Select the group category to connect with the Dropbox folder
GROUP DROPBOX FOLDERS

Group Dropbox Folder Tips

- Once a submission is made to a group Dropbox folder, it cannot be changed back to an individual assignment
- Students will see two indicators that a Dropbox folder is for group submissions:
  - An icon to the right of the folder name
  - The folder name will appear to them as [Their Group Name]: [Dropbox Folder Name]
    - For example: Group 1: Assignment 1
- We recommend you keep the default settings that allow unlimited submissions and keep all submissions as multiple students will be have access to submit to the same folder
GROUP DROPBOX FOLDER – DEMO!

- Create a Group Dropbox Folder
- Grade Submissions
GROUPS AND RESTRICTIONS/RELEASE CONDITIONS
WHAT IS A RELEASE CONDITION?

• A feature within CourseLink that allows the instructor to control who can view different content and activities based on the students meeting a specific condition

• There is an extensive list of available conditions related to a variety of tools including:
  – Classlist (group, section, role)
  – Dropbox (submitted, not submitted)
  – Discussions (posts, no post)
  – Quizzes (completed, not completed, grade)
  – Grades (grade received, no grade)
HOW CAN I USE GROUP RELEASE CONDITIONS?

Content
• Release conditions can be applied to modules, submodules, and individual pieces of content
• How?
  – Add dates and restrictions
  – For individual content, open context menu and select edit properties in-place
• Examples
  – For a case study assignment, each group can view their own case study, but not the others
GROUP RESTRICTED CONTENT

- Instructor/TA can see all the pages & associated conditions
- Students see only the page(s) made available to them
- Release conditions can be removed later to provide all students with access to content, as needed
HOW CAN I USE GROUP RELEASE CONDITIONS?

Intelligent Agents

- Intelligent agents allow you to send automated emails to students
- Often used to reach out to students who may not be engaging as expected with your course (e.g., not accessing your course site, poor performance on an assessment), but can also be useful as automated reminders of upcoming work
- Example: Send a reminder email to the groups that have their in-class presentation next week
INTELLIGENT AGENTS

Subject: [OrgUnitCode] - Upcoming presentation next week

Message:

Hello {InitiatingUserFirstName}

This is a reminder that your in-class presentation is coming up next week on Thursday, October 21st. Please ensure you and your group members are fully prepared and ready to go. This includes submitting your slide deck to the appropriate Dropbox folder before your presentation.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.

All the best,

Dr. C

Release Conditions

To access this item, users must satisfy

Any condition must be met

Member of group: Demo - Groups of # > Group 1
Member of group: Demo - Groups of # > Group 3
Member of group: Demo - Groups of # > Group 5
Member of group: Demo - Groups of # > Group 6
GROUPS AND GRADES

How can using groups assist with grading?

- Groups are most often used in team-taught courses to help evenly divide up the students for team assessment.
- If you have a teaching team of 1 instructor and 2 TAs that will be grading, you could create a group category using the # of Groups feature.
  - Setting the # of groups to 3, will evenly distribute the students and each team member can be assigned a group to grade.
- In any tool with assessment options in CourseLink, you can filter students by group, allowing each member to easily locate and grade their assigned students.
GROUPS AND GRADES

Considerations when using groups for team grading

• Student have access to the groups tool and will be able to see the name of the group category and the group they are enrolled in

• When naming your assessment group category and groups, you may want to:
  – Give the category a non-descript name (i.e. Course Administration)
  – Rename the groups to something easy to remember for the grader but not identifiable to the student (i.e. Red, Blue, Green)
GROUPS AND GRADES – DEMO!

- Create assessment team groups
- Use them to filter in Discussions, Dropbox, and Grades
- Bonus: Export a list of students with their group enrolments using Grades
WHERE TO GET SUPPORT FOR GROUPS
WHERE TO GET SUPPORT 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
• Visit one of our Drop-ins!
  – We have one today (2-4pm): https://bit.ly/collaboration-dropin
  – There are also several next week from Mon-Thu: https://opened.uoguelph.ca/instructor-resources/instructional-technology-webinar-series
RESOURCES


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