

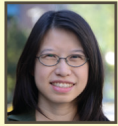
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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Centre for Teaching and Learning

**Tools
For
Excellence**

Small Group Work

The more students are involved the better they learn. The following suggestions for group work might be helpful.

Think – Pair – Share:

Each person considers the topic/question and writes down some ideas/answers. S/he joins with one other for discussion. This provides a good basis for wider discussion.

Buzz Groups:

Working in small groups, people discuss an issue. Topics can include:

- How much they already know about a topic.
- What they are not sure about.
- What they want the lecturer to cover next.

Round:

Every person takes a turn to make a statement. Useful topics:

- One thing I need to know about.
- Something that I learned today.
- One important point (about the topic).

Case Study:

A 'story' or scenario is presented to the group (often, but not always, as a handout). Groups discuss the story or work together on questions.

Group Discussion:

Groups (up to 6 people) talk about a topic. A set of questions from the lecturer helps to structure the discussion and focus the group. The larger the group, the more difficult it is for everyone to participate actively.

Syndicate:

Groups of students work together on a project which entails researching and presenting (written and/or oral) information. Useful for focusing on group and cooperative skills while covering discipline content.

Tell your Partner:

Pairs. Each person explains a topic/concept/ answer to someone else. The partner has to listen, then ask questions.

Fishbowl:

One group discusses a topic. The second group observes the discussion and each person records a partner's contributions (and gives individual feedback afterwards), or the important parts of the discussion (may be identification of issues, applications, generalizations, etc., depending on the task instructions).

Peer Evaluation:

The class is divided into pairs. Partners exchange written work or observe each other's oral presentation. They give each other feedback and work together to identify:

What was good.

What needed improvement.

How it could be improved.

They can focus on delivery and/or content. This activity works best if students already have knowledge on the topic.

Giving them a checklist is also a good idea.

Role-play:

Groups/ pairs/ individuals 'act out' information on a specific topic, often in front of the class or group. If they lack confidence, they can work in pairs without 'performing' in front of the whole class. Set a time limit for each group. This activity can be used for formative or summative assessment. It is important to allow time for participants to de-role/debrief.

Brainstorming:

Everyone thinks of as many different ideas as possible. All ideas are accepted and recorded without comment. The ideas are evaluated after a set time period, or when inspiration ends.

1 – 2 – 4 – More:

Each person writes brief notes about the topic and then compares them with a partner. Each pair discusses its combined list with another couple. This provides a good basis for discussion in the wider group. It is a good idea to limit the '1 – 2 – 4' stages, e.g. 2 minutes or so for individual and for paired work, 5 minutes for the '4' stage.

Centre for Teaching and Learning

The Centre for Teaching and Learning at UBC's Okanagan campus promotes and supports excellence in teaching and learning. The Centre provides campus-wide support for all models of teaching and learning, including online learning.

It is our Mission:

"To lead, support and promote teaching and learning excellence, innovation and scholarship at the UBC Okanagan campus."