eCampus Weekly Update

Invite 💡 *Ignite* 💡 *Inspire*

This Week on the Ohlone eCampus

Week of February 22, 2021

Focus Topic: Group Power

That's right! We are bringing the topic back... Group Power! Not only does group work foster student-to-student interaction, but it also provides several other benefits as well. For example, group work gives students an opportunity to work in smaller sized groups where a variety of points and/or ideas can be expressed (which also supports equity and diversity in the classroom). Group work also provides students with an opportunity to teach each other and practice life-long skills such as communication, project management, and how to navigate challenging situations. Facilitating, organizing, and understanding group work takes a lot of preparation and time - but we promise the outcomes are well worth it. Many students have little experience working in groups well, so it's up to instructors to scaffold this life-skill.

Join us for eCampus Inspirations on February 24 or February 25 where we discuss in more detail the power of group work and how to facilitate group work in an online environment. In the meantime, we would love to share some of the group projects already taking place in your classrooms. Please consider adding your experience to a [Group Work Padlet](#) – let's keep the conversation going asynchronously!

Professional Development:

Upcoming professional development opportunity:

Join the eCampus Team during Spring Break for a rousing three day mini-camp designed to bring back memories of sunburns and time with friends! Wait! You mean you didn't spend your Spring Break on Lake Shasta? What about a trip to Miami? Surely some of you went to the Spring Break capital of the world – Miami Beach, Florida? Well, the good news is, you don't have to leave the comfort of your home (or, more importantly squeeze into a bathing suit) to join us during this Spring Break! All of the fun with none of the drama!

Let's have some fun in the sun with two camps to choose from: Alligators and Assessment and (Universal) Designer Umbrellas.

- Learn the importance of authentic assessment and explore a variety of ways students can demonstrate what they have learned in the **Alligators and Assessment Camp.** We'll take the bite out of cheating by encouraging unique and personal demonstrations of knowledge acquisition.
- Or join us for (**Universal) Designer Umbrellas** to collect tips and skills on utilizing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and concepts to design courses that meet and greet ALL students where they are and invite them to grow from there.

Each morning we will gather synchronously for morning (brain) stretches on the beach, followed by 1-2 hours of asynchronous beach activities, and gather together synchronously around the bonfire at the end of each day (4pm). Lifeguards will be available throughout the day should you need a little more support during your beach and lagoon activities.

Registration opens soon. If you missed our Winter Camp fun, you'll not want to let another awesome camp adventure pass you by! Register today for Miami Nice Camp. You won't regret it. Just ask Don Johnson.

Tech Tips
All About That Zoom
Check your Zoom account to make sure you have the latest update. Looks like we are now up to version 5.5.2. Zoom provides [instructions](#) on how to update to the latest version.

Organizing Your Canvas Dashboard
Instructors and students can customize the active courses shown on Canvas Dashboard by creating a "favorite" from the course list in your Courses / All courses. Customizing the dashboard is easy, but not always obvious – especially for our students – which is why the video below is being shared with everyone in Canvas as an announcement this week.

Take a moment to organize your Canvas space and encourage your students to do the same. Video instructions on how to [organize your Canvas dashboard](#) have been provided by the eCampus team.

eCampus Inspirations – Continue to Learn With Us

Schedule of Inspirations Workshops - Group Power!

Dive deeper with the eCampus team on the power of group activities. During this workshop we will talk about the necessary elements to support effective group work, share group project/work ideas, and how to facilitate group work in an online environment.

Day	Date	Time	Facilitator	Zoom Link
Wednesday	2/24	12:30pm- 1:30pm	eCampus Team	Meeting Link
Thursday	2/25	1:30pm-2:30pm	eCampus Team	Meeting Link

General Office Hours

Join us for eCampus office hours every Thursday from 3:00pm – 5:00pm in Zoom.

If that does not fit your schedule, we invite you to schedule one-on-one support with someone from the eCampus team if you need help or have a question. To do this, please submit an IT ticket and be sure to include the following information: a few days/times you are available, and specific tasks/questions you would like assistance with. Based on this information, we'll assign someone from the eCampus team to work with you. If there is a particular person you like working with, no problem – include the person's name in your ticket. Your success is our primary concern!

Mindful Minute

The topic this week is the benefits to students of working in groups. There is a down-side, as well, and many of us have experienced it. Though our plates are overflowing, we may find that we say "yes" to more and more tasks. When group work is added into the mix, you may find that a job that was tasked to a co-worker that is prerequisite to your getting your piece completed is not getting done. As a result, you take on that piece as well and it becomes your priority. This can become a habit and lead to stress, frustration, and an unhealthy work-life balance. If this sounds familiar, you may benefit from setting compassionate boundaries. Compassionate boundaries are a way to say "no" while listening to your feelings and responding with compassion toward yourself and the other person involved. This article by Carly Hauck on Mindful.org will provide you with five steps the help you create a compassionate boundary.

Notes from Mary

I know – you're thinking "G*roups again! They don't work. Students don't like them."* Well yes, we're talking about groups again. Groups are one example of promoting the social aspect of learning for online students; one way to require student to student interaction. So, let's look at some strategies to guide students in making the most out of groups:

- Select a dynamic task: Projects and tasks that are benefit from multiple approaches and perspectives will promote collaboration.
- Teach group dynamics: Spend time discussing how groups work and what roles members take, how to communicate in a group.
- Assign Roles: Share information on group roles and ask students to include role assignments in report out on group activity.
- Include self-assessment or reflection: Reflection can remind students of the role they played to support and interfere with group progress. Use prompts such as "What did you do to help your group performance? What did you contribute? What did you learn from each member of the team?"
- Stay in touch with each group: Watch for signs of high anxiety from students who may struggle with the social aspects of groups. Offer support for all students and be open to one person groups (Have them bring in diverse resources and a peer or mentor review to build their team skills.) Flower Darby shares more on [Why Some Students Struggle with Group Work](#) in her blog on Faculty Focus.

These strategies work when instructors guide and focus on the group process as well as group project. Looking forward to reading what you share on the Padlet!
Mary

Resource

Chang, Y & Brickman, P. (2018). When group work doesn't work: Insights from students. *CBE – Life Sciences Education, 17*: 3.