

Smash Card

Classroom Techniques for **GROUPS**

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Groups work well when...

Use groups when:

- there is enough work to keep each group member occupied
- you want students to interact socially around a topic
- you want learning to happen more quickly
- you want students to experience the *advantages* of team work
- you want students to experience the *disadvantages* of team work
- sharing and explaining a concept could help student retention
- you want to develop relationships in your classroom for the future
- you have a terrific project but couldn't possibly mark it individually
- you have the time and energy to dedicate to facilitating teamwork

Effects of group size on problem solving:

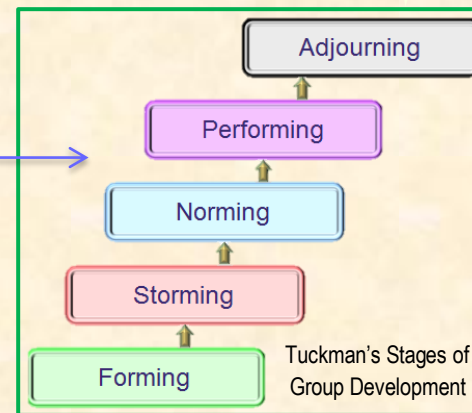
'While researchers had hypothesized that groups of two would outperform an equivalent number of individuals, the results of the study actually demonstrated that **groups of two people performed at the same level as individuals working alone**. Also, while groups of three, four and five people performed significantly better than an equivalent number of "best individual" and two-person groups, these three groups did not differ from each other in terms of performance.'

Excerpted from: *Effects of Group Size on Problem Solving*
<http://psychology.about.com/od/psychologynews/qt/groupsize.htm>
by Kendra Cherry

Groups need direction...

Get groups off to a good start by:

- thinking carefully about whether to form the groups yourself or allow students to form their own groups (pros and cons to both)
- starting with teaching then a lesson on the theory of group dynamics/development (try Tuckman's Stages of Group Development)
- keeping team size manageable and appropriate to the task (4-5)
- requiring them to create a set of rules that will regulate their work ('Team Charter') and have them submit it for a mark
- recognizing that working with others takes effort & **time**; be ready to problem solve and to give up some class time for team meetings and Professor check-ins



Managing the Lone Wolves

Some students dislike group work.



Identify these students before group work begins.

Place them in a group together. It's easier to work with like-minded people.

Tools

Online tools for groups:

Use Course Management System your College Already Has
-use 'Groups' tool in Desire2Learn; WebCT; Blackboard

15 Free Tools for Web Based Collaboration

<http://sixrevisions.com/tools/15-free-tools-for-web-based-collaboration>

Wiggio: online collaboration
<http://wiggio.com>

Mindmeister: mindmapping
<http://www.mindmeister.com>

