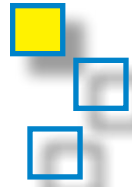


White Board



Become An Effective Teacher & Save Your Valuable Teaching Time and Energy

Center for Effective Undergraduate Teaching (864) 388-8426

Group Work: A Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for All Members

I RECENTLY REVISITED something I have always considered a great resource. It originally appeared in a 1992 issue of The Teaching Professor and was published then as a Study Group Member's Bill of Rights. It outlined what individuals had the right to expect when they participated in study groups. Students not only have rights, they also have responsibilities. Those rights and responsibilities are relevant in any group activity used to accomplish educational goals. The version below attempts to capture those larger expectations and duties.

There are lots of ways a document like this can be used, starting with simply distributing it to students prior to their participation in a group activity. During their first meeting,

group members could review and discuss the document; and revise it so that it directly applies to the activity they will complete together. The teacher can help underscore the importance of the document by having students sign and return the document. Or, you might have group members construct their own bill of rights and responsibilities.

Groups need to be empowered to fix problems that emerge as they work together. Peer pressure can motivate behavior change, but the pressure has to be applied. A document like this won't solve all group interaction problems, but it does make students aware that groups have collective responsibilities just as they have individual responsibilities. A student in a group has the responsibility

to participate, but if that student does not, the group has a responsibility to seek that participation. It's difficult for most students to stay silent, if another group member directly asks for their opinion.

Some teachers are reluctant to use group work because some groups work together poorly. And, with a lot of content already in the course, the teacher doesn't have time to teach small group dynamics. But when using groups, teachers should do what they can to help students learn how to work productively with others. A resource like this begins the process. It makes students aware that their membership in a group comes with rights and responsibilities, and that the group has the right to deal with any issues that might emerge.

Adapted from a study group bill of rights developed by D. G. Longman and published in The Teaching Professor, 1992, 6 (7), 5.

Maryellen Weimer, PhD;
Group Work: A Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for All Members; Faculty Focus; February 8, 2012;
[http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-professor-blog/group-work-a-bill-of-rights-and-responsibilities-for-all-members/?utm_source=cheetah&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2012.02.10%20Faculty%20Focus%20Alert]; February 10, 2012.

GROUP MEMBER BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- You have the right and responsibility to select meeting times and locations that are convenient for all members.
- You have the right to contribute to the formation of group goals, the dividing of the work among group members, and the setting of deadlines.
- You have the right to expect all group members to do their fair share of the work and you have the right to confront group members who are not doing their fair share. You have the responsibility to complete the work assigned to you.
- You have the responsibility to be an active participant in the group process. And you have the right to expect active participation from other group members.
- You have the right to expect feedback from the group on work you complete for the group and you have the responsibility to provide constructive feedback on the work of other group members.
- You have the right to expect group meetings to begin and end promptly and that the group will follow an agenda that outlines the tasks it expects to accomplish during the meeting. You have the responsibility to help the group fulfill these expectations by getting to meetings on time and helping the group develop and follow the agenda.
- You have the right to participate in a group that works cooperative and handles disagreements constructively.
- You have the right to ask group members to limit the amount of time devoted to socialization or the discussion of extraneous topics. You have the responsibility not to engage in excessive socialization or to bring up extraneous topics. You have the responsibility to help the group stay on task.
- You have the right to expect that group members will listen to you respectfully and you have the responsibility to listen to all group members respectfully.

Spring Mini-Term Begins - Mar 12
Faculty Meeting - Mar 14
Open House - Mar 24

WHITE BOARD 2011-12 Publication Dates First Monday of the Month

September 5	March 5
October 3	April 2
November 7	May 7
December 5	June 4
January 3	July 2
February 6	August 6

Newsletters Archive [HERE](#)

*Center for Effective
Undergraduate Teaching*
Carnel Learning Center, Suite 106.
Phone: 388-8426

Practical Advice for Going from Face to Face to Online Teaching

DEVELOPING AN ONLINE course based on an existing face-to-face course requires more than learning how to use the technology and loading the material into the learning management system because, as Catherine Nameth, education outreach coordinator at the University of California-Los Angeles, says, “not everything will transfer directly from the face-to-face environment to the online environment.” This transition requires the instructor to rethink and reconfigure the material and anticipate students’ needs.

ROADMAP TO THE COURSE

Nameth recommends beginning the course design process with the syllabus—the “roadmap” both for the instructor when designing the course and for students when they take the course. “There is a lot that we do as instructors face to face that perhaps we don’t realize we do and don’t realize its importance. In an online course, particularly in an asynchronous online course, there’s not that real-time feedback or guidance. Because of this, I came to regard my syllabus as a roadmap that really defines the course both for myself and my students,” Nameth says. “As students read through it, particularly before registering for the course, they can really get a sense of what the course will be about.”

To that end, Nameth includes information about the following elements in the syllabus:

- welcome message
- objectives
- assignments
- class norms
- communication methods
- technical requirements
- skills needed to take the course
- course structure
- log in information technical support

Having an extensive syllabus is important because from time to time student may not be able to access the course management system. For example, some assignments—such as readings from the textbook or essays—may not require students to work within the course management system. When the syllabus contains detailed information about the assignments, students can continue their progress in the course even when they

are temporarily unable to access the course management system.

Nameth lists assignments in the syllabus and in the course management system by week and assignment number (e.g., W1 01 refers to week 1, assignment 1), which makes it easier for students to navigate the course.

WHAT WORKS?

Not everything that works in the face-to-face classroom will work online. Some elements will need to be reworked to fit the medium, and others will require an entirely different approach. “Remind yourself of the purpose of the course—the goals and objectives you set for yourself and the students,” Nameth says.

For example, a discussion activity that you normally do in the face-to-face class may not be suitable to the online format. A substitute may be having students watch a video clip and discuss it in a threaded discussion or write a short essay.

As with the face-to-face environment, once the course is created it will require changes. “I think some people still have the notion that because you’ve taught the course face to face many years it’s easy to [create an online version]. I’ve heard many times, ‘Once I get the lectures recorded and everything uploaded in Blackboard set the way I want it, I won’t really have to work on the course much any more. I won’t have to think about it. It will be easy. This will be a one-time transfer.’ I think that’s definitely a mistake. Just as in the face-to-face environment it takes tweaking. You might need to change your teaching style for a particular group of students. One group may need more scaffolding than another,” Nameth says.

When creating an online course it’s important to have realistic expectations. It would be great to include video clips in each module, but you need to consider the resources required to make that happen and how it will affect the learning experience and the level of support students might needs as a result.

Nameth recommends starting with a simple design and focusing on the learning outcomes and guarding against becoming overly excited about what various technologies can do. She

recommends looking at the course from the perspective of the instructor, student, and educational technology expert. Access the course as a student and check to see if the instructions are clear, and try to anticipate what kind of support students might need if you include certain multimedia elements.

“Think about keeping it simple, true to your purpose, your learning objectives, and your enthusiasm for the course. When you put in a technical component, double-check the website. Make sure that it’s still working and easy to navigate. If you embed video, make sure that it can be viewed on a PC and a Mac. I do some things that require a Java update. Can I explain to students how to do that? Having one video in there can lead to hours of questions. Ask yourself, ‘If I were a student what would my questions be? What are the possible problems?’ As the instructor you should be prepared to answer those questions or points students to resources that can answer those questions,” Nameth says.

This is not to suggest that you should avoid using a variety of multimedia elements or tools that require some getting used to. They can be essential course elements. For example, in Nameth’s online pronunciations course, it was necessary for students to be able to record their voices, and one of the biggest problems was students plugging in their microphones incorrectly. The first few times she taught the course, Nameth received three to five emails per week (in two courses of 15 students each) asking for help setting up the microphone. Now, instead having to answer each email, she provides students with a diagram and a video that demonstrates the proper way to install the microphone. “The more experience we have and the more pitfalls we encounter, the better we become as instructors and communicators,” Nameth says.

Excerpted from Online Classroom (Dec. 2010): 1,3.

Rob Kelly; Practical Advice for Going from Face to Face to Online Teaching; Faculty Focus; February 9, 2012;

[<http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/practical-advice-for-going-from-face-to-face-to-online-teaching/>] ; February 10, 2012