Home-Base Groups

Home-Base groups are an alternative to the challenge of forming new groups each time an activity (either in or out of class) demands collaborative learning. The idea is to keep the same group in place for the entire academic term.

Appropriate Student Level: Any
Suggested Class Size: 3 – 100+
Ease of Use Rating: Easy

Activity Description:

Forming groups can be a challenge for students and instructors. Ideally the groups should integrate academic and gender differences, seeking a balance for both. Realistically, groups tend to be more homogeneous than desired, encompassing all the same gender, same academic standing and/or students who 'like' working together for a variety of reasons. For many reasons, groups are frequently thrown together or haphazardly assigned on an as-needed basis.

By building home-base groups, this small stable member group can provide support and assistance to each member during the semester. The group can meet frequently and discuss insights and questions from a reading assignment, trade notes and assist each other as they prepare for class. This grouping may also be used for formal assignments reducing the confusion when an in-class collaborative activity is assigned.

The home-base group is designed to reinforce the strengths and weaknesses of each member. Students learn to rely on each other's strengths and can more easily recognize their own weaknesses. As the group remains constant, it is expected that students will not have to reassess their team members and 'get to know each other' all over again each time an assignment is given.

References:

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Brown, Nina W. (2000) Creating High Performance Classroom Groups, Falmer Press, New York

MacGregor, Jean (2000) Strategies for energizing large classes: From small groups to learning communities, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

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