

Supporting and Maintaining Online Learning (Slide 1)

Hello and welcome to this mini seminar on supporting and maintaining online learning. My name is Christian Loudon and I'm an academic development specialist at the University of Calgary.

Online Group Work (Slide 2)

Now let's talk about online group work.

Online groupwork tips (Slide 3)

In many ways, online group work is pretty similar to in-person group work. The first thing to get started with is getting to know each other. This is more than just creating an initial social connection and will help you to learn and appreciate what each member brings to the group. This will also help later in a step when it comes to dividing up the work.

The next thing to do is to determine how you'd like to work together. Some things that you might want to establish are: how do you want to communicate? By e-mail, by text, having regular meetings, or some other way? Are there certain times of day or night that you aren't expected to communicate? How will you share constructive feedback and hold each other accountable? If you set up ways to connect in advance and make sure everyone is comfortable, it will be much easier to reach out for help if you get stuck.

The next step is to set a goal. If you have an assignment, your larger goal has been set for you. So from here, consider setting incremental goals that contribute to the achievement of your main goal. This might include completing drafts of a section of the project or sharing ideas, articles, data, or other sources of information that are necessary for the project.

Online groupwork tips (Slide 4)

Next, you'll want to divide up tasks and set timelines for those tasks. A good approach to this is to use teammates' strengths and interests that you discovered when you got to know your group. It's a good idea to not only set deadlines for these tasks, but moments to check in on progress and to share updates.

This brings us to our next tip, which is to check in regularly. It can help to set check-ins early on in the project as it's a lot easier to mutually cancel an unneeded meeting than it is to schedule one at the last minute. These meetings don't need to be very long. It could be just a morning check-in for about 20 minutes, maybe to set goals or to chat about any issues that have come up. Also, don't forget to celebrate your successes during this time. We often focus too much on what needs work and we don't spend enough time talking about what went well. Taking a little bit of time to celebrate wins can help keep the team motivated.

Finally, it's also important to give time and space to respond to questions. One of the quirks of studying online is that for some folks it can take a little longer to respond. We miss out on a lot of nonverbal cues, and this can make communication a bit more challenging. Give your questions a few extra breaths than you normally might before expecting a response.

Thank you! (Slide 5)

For more on this and other topics, check out some of the Student Success Centre's other videos. Thanks for watching.