

## Resource Guide

---

### **Collaborative Assignments and Projects: A High Impact Practice**

Collaborative Assignments and Projects have been identified by The Association of American Colleges and Universities as a "high impact practice." High impact practices, as outlined by Kuh (2008), are core teaching practices that increase student retention and engagement. Kuh outlines the value of collaborative assignments: "...learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences.

Below are some suggestions for using technology in conjunction with collaborative assignments and projects.

- Update the study group: Facilitating study groups within a course is perhaps the most basic form of collaborative assignment. To build on this, consider using Google Docs as a way for students to build a collaborative online study guide or exam review. You can also set up groups in Blackboard and decide which tools, such as a private discussion board you want the students to use. Blackboard will randomly create groups, let students sign up for groups or you can assign students to groups manually.
- Teaching with Cases: Using the private discussion board tool in Blackboard is an excellent way to teach with cases in a larger class. You can set up groups and have each group discuss the case on their private board. Give them a specific prompt or task to work through with the case. Then an appointed member of each group can post their response to a board the entire class can see. You can rotate the appointed members for total class discussion so everyone gets a turn. Or if you're teaching a face to face class, have the groups begin the discussion online and then bring it to class for the full class discussion.
- Authentic audiences can be motivational for students doing collaborative projects. If they know a "real" audience rather than just the instructor will be seeing their projects, it can lead to engagement and a higher quality learning product. Consider a collaborative project where students produce a web-based product such a podcast or a series of white papers on a topic of concern to an outside audience.

#### Resources

AACU High Impact Practices: <https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips>

Social Pedagogies and Authentic Audiences: <http://derekbruff.org/?p=808>

Create and Manage Groups in Blackboard:

[https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Interact/Course\\_Groups/Create\\_Groups](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Interact/Course_Groups/Create_Groups)

*For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center at [cttl@slu.edu](mailto:cttl@slu.edu).*