

## Explaining the rationale for a collaborative classroom

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**Materials needed:** see [handout](#)

### **Learning challenge addressed/predictable outcome:**

Students may expect their professors to deliver course material via lecture, and may also have had bad experiences with group work. Because of these expectations, students may not be willing to cooperate with collaborative learning and/or may see it as not really helping them learn.

After learning the reasons for using group work, students will:

- recognize how participating in collaborative and group work benefits them
- be motivated to participate in collaborative and group work willingly
- connect the course content and pedagogy to their personal goals.

**Best used for:** Collaborative/group work.

### **Learning objectives/skills fostered:**

Students will recognize that they are responsible for their own learning. This recognition prepares them to be lifelong, independent learners.

### **What to do / how to do it:**

Before having students begin collaborative or group work, discuss with students how such work benefits them as learners and as workers. Provide a handout that simply and clearly explains your theory of how students learn best, the specific skills that collaborative work develops, and why these skills are important. The handout I created briefly summarizes research findings about each of these items, demonstrating to students that there is a basis for this method of teaching and learning beyond our own classroom.

### **Tips for implementing:**

This discussion can be as simple or as complex as you like. I have typically spent about 15 minutes on it on the first day of class.