Workshop Outline:
The Soloist and the Orchestra
January 27, 2011

1. Introduction
   Center for Teaching – resources and staff
   Self
   Personal interest in this topic

2. Overview: Benefits of Collaborative Learning

   Diversity & Social awareness
   Different backgrounds, different skill sets paired together
   Work w/ classmates whose histories are different from their own
   Take responsibility for each other’s learning

   Constructive Controversy
   Active disagreement benefits the group – better learning

   Critical Thinking
   By pooling resources, groups cover “basics” quickly and have
   more time to delve deeper into critical concepts

   Conflict Resolution
   Students act as mediators to come to effective group decisions

   But for all of this to happen the group project has to be effective and benefit the
   individual learner, as well as the group. So let’s work on that.

3. Exercise: One minute paper
   A challenge you’ve run into w/ group work.
   A question you have? A concern?

   Share 2-3; Collect.

   This leads us to our top three questions:
   1. How do I set up effective groups?
   2. How do I respect the individual learner in a group environment?
   3. How do I assess/grade group work?

   Effective groups work as full collaborations. The team can do more than one student
   could do alone – even the best student in class.

   Discuss collaboration: We want our students to function well together in the
group, but we can't assume that they will do this naturally without any
help from us. You can improve a group’s work tremendously by building community at the outset.

4. Exercise: Collaboration building
Partner with the person across the table (stand up and move across).
Write down one question you would like ask someone you don’t know.
Ask each other your questions; answer.

Discuss. Short talk about the value of an “ask and answer” activity
Builds speaking and listening skills.
Another example: storytelling exercise.
Note how little time it took.

Studies show that students who are invested in each other learn better and teach each other better.

It doesn’t matter very much what they talk about – get them talking. It’s a first step that seems small but pays off big.

Now that you’ve built a rapport with your partner, let’s use it.

5. Exercise: Think-pair-share
Think:
One thing you, personally, need as an individual learner.
This can be based on a frustration you have had, or a need you have seen.

Pair:
Talk w/ partner: Work to solve this. How would a group setting be organized so that your needs were met?

Share 2-3, full group.

The things you need are the same things your students need.
And they are as varied. Think about what you need, and how you would correct it. Often that works very well.

6. Key ways to respect individual learners in a group setting.
Allow enough time for individual and group learning
Not either or
Enough class time for groups to work together
Plan projects with time built in for individual reflection AND group effort so students don’t feel they have to choose.

Encourage groups to speak and hear different opinions
Groups that can openly disagree (respectfully) function at a higher level because more points of view are heard.
Also helps individuals feel their own voices are being heard

**Develop projects that don’t encourage inequity.** – many problems in group work are the result of poor projects!
Avoid projects that can be parceled out
Individual projects masquerading as group projects
Discuss writing projects

**Balance group and individual grading**
Educational scholars disagree about how much weight should be given to group, verses individual effort.

In agreement: a significant portion of a student’s grade should be for her own individual work

Grade students to reflect their work
as a group (incentive to work well as a group)
AND their individual contributions.
*Example: quiz w/ bonus for group’s performance. (85%, ex).*

**Assessment**
Have students invest in that process:
How much weight do they think should be group/individual/peer evaluation?

Provide different ways to review different kinds of learners – maybe one student makes a model, one holds a question and answer session with the class, etc.

*Lets look at that.*

**7. Exercise: Four Corners/ strength mapping**
The room is divided into four areas based on different learning preferences.
Participants stand in the area they most identify with. Divide participants into new groups based on the 4 corners

Discuss how students are paired in a group:
- heterogeneous, homogeneous, quick pairings, longer pairings,
- topic based pairings.

Discuss roles

**Roles** Define who does what
Can be self selected or you can assign
Can work w/ students strengths or weaknesses
Can rotate or stay same
8. Transition into Final Activity: Different Options for Assessment.
Each group develops a creative way to assess different kinds of learners in a group setting. End of activity: each group’s “reporter” shares the group’s most creative solution.

9. Wrap up.
   Handouts
   Questions
   Surveys