

How Do I Respect the Individual Learner in a Group Setting?

1. Allow enough time for individual learning *and* group learning -- throughout the semester and during specific group projects.

Many students learn best using a combination of group work time and individual work time. Some students need more individual time than others to process information, others simply need quiet to study or to reflect on their learning. Plan group projects to allow enough time for individual learners to study on their own *and* to work with the group.

2. Encourage groups to speak (and to hear) differences of opinion.

Groups that are able to openly disagree function at higher levels than groups that cannot do this. Not only is disagreement essential for developing a high-functioning team, it also helps students feel that their individual voices are being heard.

Discuss the value of differing opinions with your students. Have a conversation about how students can disagree respectfully but clearly.

3. Provide different options for individual students to demonstrate their learning.

If a group is teaching a topic to the class, provide options for visual learners, auditory learners, and kinesthetic learners to choose from. For example, visual learners may create charts and graphs, while kinesthetic learners may create a hands-on demonstration.

4. Balance group grading and individual grading appropriately.

Educational scholars disagree on how much weight should be given to group grades versus individual grades, but are in agreement that a significant portion of a student's grade should be for his or her own (individual) work. Grade students in a way that recognizes their individual work *and* their work as a productive group.

For example, students take a quiz individually, then immediately meet as a group to discuss it. Students then retake the quiz as a group. Each student's final grade is a combination of her individual score (50-75%) and the group score (25-50%).