Create and Use Groups in a Course

The Groups feature allows an instructor to assign participants to one or more groups within a course. These can function as working groups.

The Groups are set up at the course level, but implemented at the activity level. Having created groups within a course, instructors can, for example, assign each group their own forums and wikis for in-group discussion or group projects.

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Part I: Creating Groups

1. Enter your LATTE course and click on the Users link in the Administration block under "Course Utilities".

2. From the drop-down menu that appears, click on Groups.
3. On the Groups page you should see two empty panes (“Groups” and “Members of”). Click on the Create group button to get started.

4. Add a group name and optional description. Then, click Save changes at the bottom of the page.

5. This will return you to the Groups page where the newly created group will appear in the “Groups” panel. Repeat steps 2-3 until you have created all of the groups you will need.

Part II: Adding Members
1. Groups are only useful if they have members. Starting from the Groups page, select your first group (making sure that the group is highlighted), then click on the “Add/remove users” button under the “Members of” panel. This will open the Add/remove users page for that particular group.

2. In the “Potential members” pane on the right, select the user(s) you wish to add to the group by clicking on their names. If there are a large number of potential members you can narrow the list by using the Search box appearing below the pane.
   - Selecting Multiple (Separate) Names: If you wish to select more than one participant, hold down the “Ctrl” (Mac: Command) button while clicking their names.
   - Selecting a Range of (Consecutive) Names: To select a range of names, click on a name at the top, hold down “Shift” and click on a name below to select both clicked names and all names in between.

3. Once you have selected the user name(s), click the <Add button. The selected names should now appear in the “Group members” pane and disappear from the “Potential members” pane.
4. Click the “Back to Groups” button to return to the Groups page.

Part III: Removing Users From Groups

1. Starting from the Groups page, select your the group you wish to remove users from (making sure that the group is highlighted). Then click on the “Add/remove users” button under the “Members of” panel. This will open the Add/remove users page for that particular group.

2. To remove a user from a group, click on their name in the “Existing members” pane and then click on the Remove > button. This will remove the name from the group and return it to the “Potential members” pane.
Part IV: Auto-Create Groups

If you want to automate or randomize which students appear in which groups, you can use the “Auto-create groups” button. This is useful for breaking large classes down into manageable chunks, particularly if you will be assigning students to discussion or lab groups rather than allowing them to sign up for groups.

1. Enter your LATTE course and click on the Users link in the Administration block under Course Utilities.

2. From the drop-down menu that appears, click on Groups.

3. On the Groups page click on the “Auto-create groups” button below the “Groups” pane on the left side of the page.
4. The **Auto create based on** drop down menu offers you the choice to determine either the number of groups or the number of members per group:
   - Number of groups: will generate the number of groups you specify in the next step, LATTE will figure out how many members each group should have.
   - Group/Member count: will generate groups with the number of members you specify in the next step, LATTE will figure out how many groups that requires.

After selecting your preferred option, fill out the **Group/members count** box.

5. If you are specifying the “Members per group,” you may use the setting “Prevent last small group” under the “Group members” section. If the number of students in the course is not evenly divisible by the number of group members you specified, LATTE will (by default) create an additional group for the remainder of the students. If you wish to prevent this, check the “Prevent last small group” box. Doing so will add the remainder of the students to other groups.
   - Example: You have 10 students and specify 3 members per group. Leaving the box unchecked with create three groups of 3 and one group of 1. Checking the box will create two groups of 3 and one group of 4.
6. If you only wish for students (not instructors or grading TAs) to be automatically added to the groups, select “Student” from the “Select members from role” drop-down menu.

7. The "Naming scheme" box allows you to control how groups are named. # is replaced by sequential numbers, and @ by letters. 
   - Example:
     - *Group @* will create group with a naming scheme Group A, Group B, Group C . . .
     - *Group #* will create group with a naming scheme Group 1, Group 2, Group 3 . . .

8. Under the section “Grouping”, add a Grouping name. Grouping name allows you to create a new grouping and allocate the new auto-created groups to be created to it.
9. Click the “Preview” button to see a preview of how the groups will be generated. If you do not like these groups, you can alter the settings and click “Preview” again to view how the settings alter the groups.
10. Once you are satisfied, click “Submit” to generate the groups. This will return you to the Groups page, where you will see your newly generated groups.

Part V: Import Group Names
You can bulk-create Group names (without students) by creating a .CSV file in Excel.

1. Open Excel
2. Give one column the title of “groupname”
3. Enter in all the group names into that column
4. Save the document as a .CVS file
5. Upload the file into the “Import Groups” tool
6. The groups should now appear in your list, and you can add students using the “Add/Remove Users” column.

Part VI: Using Groups When Setting Up Activities
Groups can be used to allow participants to work together in separate Activities. They are most commonly used in Forums to allow groups to talk among themselves. Groups can be used in Assignments, Chat, Choice, Database, Forum, Questionnaire, Quiz, and Wiki.

Assigning Group Activities:
Note: You must first set up groups on the course level for group activities to work. (See Part I or Part IV of this guide for instructions on setting up groups.)

1. Enter your LATTE course and turn editing on.
2. In the selected module, click the “Add an Activity or Resource” option box.

3. From the drop-down menu, select the activity you wish to add.
4. The “Add an Activity or Resource” page will open. Enter a name for the activity and description.
5. Scroll down and click on the “Common module settings” section. The “Group modes” drop down will allow you to determine how groups will be used in the activity.
   - No groups – groups not used, everyone is part of one big group. E.g. in a forum, all participants will use the same forum.
   - Separate groups – groups are used, each group can only see their own group’s work. E.g. in a forum, each group will have its own forum and participants will be unable to view other groups’ forums.
   - Visible groups – groups are used, each group works in their own group, but can also see other groups’ work. E.g. in a forum, each group will have its own forum and participants will be able to view other groups’ forums.
6. Save changes.

**Part VII: Using Group Forums**

Groups are most commonly used in Forums. Using groups in Forums allows the instructor to create individual forum discussion threads for each group. These separate discussions can be used to provide groups with a space in which to communicate about group projects or to respond to discussion questions collaboratively.

**Set Up a Forum for Group Use:**

1. Create a General Forum in your LATTE course. (Click here for more detailed instructions.)
2. Once you have named the forum and determined its other settings, select either “Separate groups” or “Visible groups” from the Group mode drop-down menu.
Separate groups: use this setting when you do not want groups to view each other’s work. For example, if you want to pose a single question (or set of questions) to the whole class, separate groups will allow each group to respond to the question(s) without being able to view other group’s responses.

Visible groups: use this setting when you do want groups to be able to view each other’s work. For example, if you want to assign each group a different question (or set of questions), visible groups will allow each group to work on their own questions and to view other groups’ responses to their questions.

3. Click Save and return to course.

Creating Group-Only Forum Discussions:

1. To create a forum thread for a specific group, click on the forum you would like to alter.
2. While inside the forum you can decide if you would like to make a forum post for a specific group or for all of the groups from the drop-down menu next to “Separate Groups.”

Group forum

Group work discussion.

Separate groups: All participants

Add a new discussion topic

3. Click the “Add a new discussion topic” button.
4. Post to your discussion topic by clicking the “Post to forum” button.

5. Having returned to the Forum page, repeat steps 1-3 for any other groups (or discussion topics).
6. Once you have created all of your discussion topics, return to the forum page. To view all topics in the forum, select “All participants” from the Separate/Visible groups drop down menu. You will see a complete listing of discussions in the forum with a column specifying their group.

For a demonstration on how to create groups, please watch this video.

Related articles

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