

# ***Welcome!***

While we are setting up our session on  
*Designing Safer, More Effective Teamwork Activities in the Classroom,*  
we invite you to take part in a mentimeter activity using your mobile device.

**Please participate by either:**

A. Scanning this QR code using your phone

**OR**

B. Visiting [menti.com](https://www.menti.com) and entering code **7445 8710**



# Designing Safer, More Effective Teamwork Activities in the Classroom

*By “Three friendly people delivering a pleasant workshop”*

Celine

Ainsley

Nausheen

Our gathering today is being held on the UBC Point Grey (Vancouver) campus, which sits on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nation.

# Learning goals

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- The real-life impact of teamwork in our classrooms
- Some of the barriers/difficulties that can affect students experience of teamwork with regard to the neurodiverse spectrum, mental health and wellbeing
- Some practical tips to make teamwork safer and more effective

# Share your perspective:

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Write down one or two words that capture your experience, or perspective of group-work

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# It's okay to be uncomfortable with an uncomfortable topic.

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*This workshop might trigger intense emotions that are perfectly valid. Engaging in this discussion might be challenging as it involves a self-reflection on our perceptions and our practices.*

**Thank you for being here!**

*We also want to acknowledge that you are all coming with different expectations in terms of learning. We might not address all of them, but we are can discuss further with you if you need more information or support.*

# What are pair and small group work?

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- Learning activities that promote interactions and communication and foster learning
- Beyond learning: ideal to build interpersonal, collaborative, and social skills
- More complex interactions in small group than pairs (pattern differs between both)
- Small group favors team building and leadership development

# Why focus on group work?

**Education:** it is **popular!**

Group work implies **soft skills** that are defined and expected by the majority (verbal communication, gesture, social skills...) but are **not necessarily expressed in the same way by everyone.**

Group work could be **perceived as negative or traumatic experience** by some individuals:

- Not enjoying the format
- Not being able to express their creativity (**divergent thinking**)

**Activity:** How is group work perceived by neurodivergent students and those struggling with their mental health?

# Activity: Read, Reflect, Share

**How is group work perceived by neurodivergent students and those struggling with their mental health?**

- 1. Independently, read the quotes in the handouts. (5 minutes)**
  - A. Which quotes (if any) surprise you?
  - B. Which quotes (if any) capture feelings or experiences that resonate with your own?
- 2. In the large group, we will ask for (brave) volunteers to read out loud one quote that they found surprising or resonated. (5 minutes)**



# Defining the term 'trauma'

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**Trauma:** a negative experience or set of experiences that impact and sometimes overwhelm a person's ability to function in their day-to-day lives.

- **one-time trauma events** (violence, natural disasters, motor vehicle collision)
- **ongoing occurrence** (COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing uncertainty, financial stress, microaggressions)
- **intergenerational trauma** The Holocaust on Jewish families, slavery on African American communities, residential schools on Canadian Indigenous peoples, war and displacement on refugee families.

# How does our trauma operate in our day to day lives?

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What determines our funnel size?

What is the capacity of our funnel? overall context combined with today's experiences

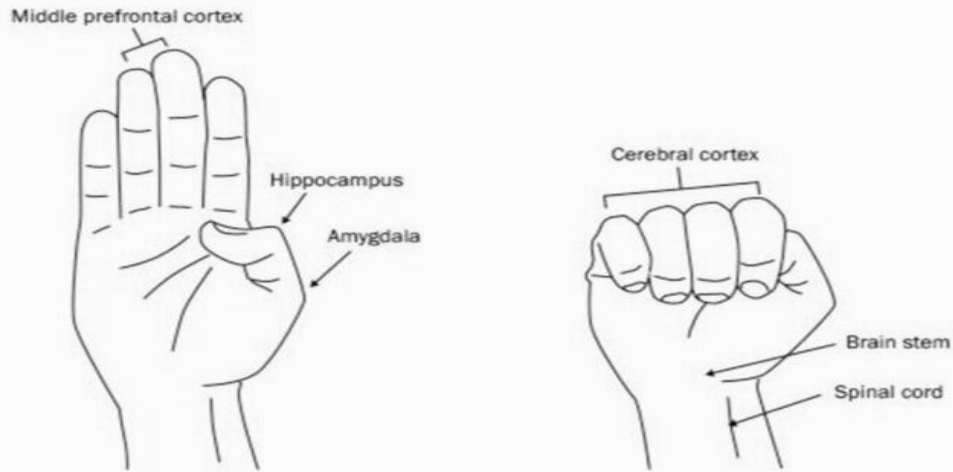
How much 'liquid' is passing through it, and at what speed?



# What happens in our brains?

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Use your hands to imagine your brain



*Hand model courtesy of Dan Siegel*

# A trauma aware approach

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With increased awareness of the effects that trauma has on people's ability to think, learn and connect with others, the 5Rs outline the different aspects of approach that supports an environment that fosters greater safety.

The 5 Rs are:

1. Reduce
2. Regulate
3. Relate
4. Refer
5. Restore

***Reflect:* What aspects of the 5Rs, stick out for you? What might you stop, start, continue doing in your classroom?**

# Pedagogical Considerations in Our Context



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## *How frequently is teamwork used at UBC?*

According to the 2023 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE):

	First Year	Senior Year
UBC Vancouver (3820 respondents)	68%	68%
UBC Okanagan (1422 respondents)	59%	62%

What makes an **equitable** and **useful** teamwork experience?

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# What's the alternative?

Consider your Decision-Making Process:

- What am I hoping the students will show me by completing this activity?
- What do I want to give them a grade for?



Is teamwork  
the **only, most effective and productive way** for students  
to **demonstrate their learning**?

**Yes**

**No**

**No**

(i.e., teamwork **isn't** the only, most effective and productive way)

If you'd like students to demonstrate that they understand something, or can apply theories, reflect, complete a critical analysis, and such

**Then, provide options:** → *UDL Principle 3*

- **Collaborative or Independent Work:** choice of working in a group OR alone.
- **Different Format for Knowledge/Skill Check:** choice of selecting one of two formats: writing a paper OR making a presentation/ poster/ video, etc.
- **Flexible methods/format for participation:** in person or virtually, synchronously or asynchronously using a central shared document.

*Note: Please only offer options you are comfortable with.*

*To reduce student confusion or hesitations, explain (a) why you chose the options and (b) what you expect them to do.*



Yes

(i.e., teamwork **is** the only, most effective, productive and obvious way)

### Then consider:

- Providing **guidelines** on how to do group-work, such as:
  - Checklists;
  - Project planning templates;
  - How to fairly distribute work among group members.  
e.g., one is assigned researcher, one is speaker, one creates the presentation, etc.)
- Letting students **share their strategies** for working in a group
  - what works or doesn't work;
  - asking everyone to co-create community expectations of group work behavior.
- Help **engage** students: → *UDL Principle 2*
  - Ask students to keep a **journal** while working in a team: research indicates the benefits of writing and reflecting, and journal writing can be an option to help students develop their future collaboration-related career and personal skills.

*Keep in mind*

Our goal is to:  
1. reduce trauma;  
2. free up what's going into  
the funnel; and  
3. limit funnel shrinkage

# Case Studies

**Each case study will describe the same situation from two perspectives: students and instructors**

**A. Please read and discuss in your small groups (5 minutes):**

- I. Is there at least one that surprises you?
- II. Which one aspect would you change: Reduce, Regulate, Relate, Refer, or Restore?
- III. Which pedagogical approach(es) would you consider?

**B. Debrief in the larger group (5 minutes)**

# Conclusion

There is no “one size fits all” alternative or solution.



- ❖ Each **educator** has their preferences, unique situations, and capacities. Each is trying to reduce their own trauma, things going into the funnel and funnel shrinkage.
- ❖ Each **group of students** will have their own dynamics, collective goals, mix of strengths and abilities to enhance or deter their collaborations.
- ❖ Each **learner** will have their own trauma, and their own pace at which acknowledgement, recovery, and adaptation will occur.

## *Keep in mind*

- Our goal is to:
- 1.reduce trauma;
  - 2.free up what's going into the funnel; and
  - 3.limit funnel shrinkage



# Thank you!

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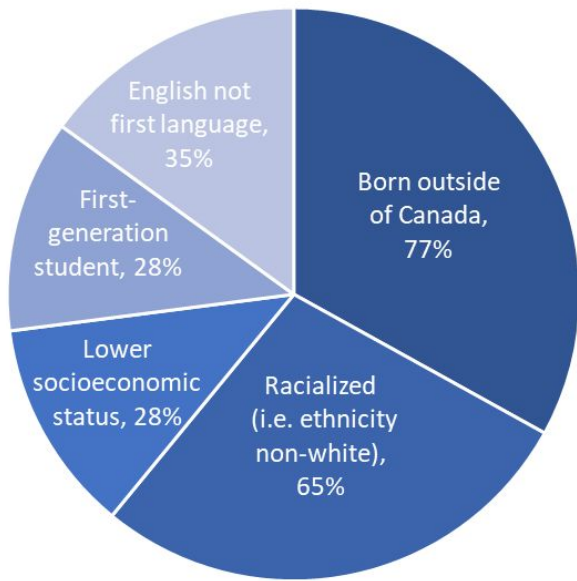
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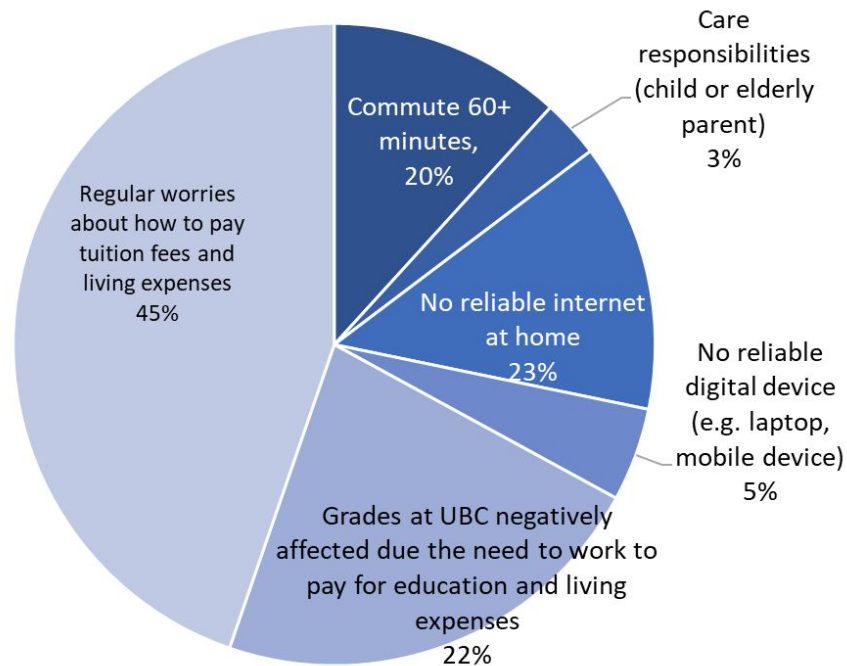
# Student Realities in Our Context

[2022 UES surveys](#)

UBCV Student Background



UBCV Student Living Arrangements



\*Please note that although the values are percentages, they are not all out of the same number of respondents.

# Flexibility and accommodations for a better experience

## Considerations:

**Student (on group projects in Computer Science):** *All those projects, for all my courses, they have the same due date. If it's a huge course, so you can't adjust it but small courses, only 70 people or something like that should be adjustable.*

→ *Allowing flexibility or options on due dates*

**Student with autism:** *I think that it would be good to have more roles and structure because I think it would be helpful to know what to expect and that everything is organized and everyone has their set time to talk.*

→ *Providing guidelines*

**Student with dyslexia:** *It would be great to be able to read the case study before the TBL takes place. So I can really have a chance to fully understand the content and make some search to go into deeper details.*

→ *Providing enough time or opportunities to prepare*

**Student with anxiety and depression:** *It would have been nice maybe if there was an option like if someone was sick or if they couldn't make it. I don't know if they could like join on a Google Doc and work with them or like maybe the team could decide to meet on zoom or something like that, like for a little bit of flexibility.*

→ *Permitting or suggesting alternative formats*

# Teamwork Success in Business

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- **Form smaller teams**—each person's performance becomes more noticeable and important for team performance.
- **Measure individual performance**—Social loafing is minimized when each member's contribution is measured.(only possible if there's separate output)
- **Specialize tasks**—It is easier to measure individual performance when each team member performs a different work activity.
- **Increase job enrichment**—Social loafing is minimized when each team member's job is highly motivating, such as when the work has high task significance or is sufficiently varied and challenging rather than boring.
- **Increase mindfulness of team obligations**—Social loafing can be minimized by alerting team members to this problem and asking them to declare their commitment to the team's performance objectives.
- **Select motivated, team-oriented employees**—Employees are less susceptible to social loafing when they identify with the team, have moderate or higher conscientiousness and agreeableness personality traits, and have a fairly high collectivist value orientation.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Organizer</b>	A team member who acts to structure what the team is doing. An Organizer also keeps track of accomplishments and how the team is progressing relative to goals and timelines.
<b>Doer</b>	A team member who willingly takes on work and gets things done. A Doer can be counted on to complete work, meet deadlines, and take on tasks to ensure the team's success. This person should focus on goal accomplishment.
<b>Challenger</b>	A team member who will push the team to explore all aspects of a situation and to consider alternative assumptions, explanations, and solutions. A Challenger often asks "why" and is comfortable debating and critiquing. Think of this role as the team's devil's advocate.
<b>Innovator</b>	A team member who regularly generates new and creative ideas, strategies, and approaches for how the team can handle various situations and challenges. An Innovator often offers original and imaginative suggestions.
<b>Team Builder</b>	A team member who helps establish norms, supports decisions, and maintains a positive work atmosphere within the team. A Team Builder calms members when they are stressed, and motivates them when they are down.
<b>Connector</b>	A team member who helps bridge and connect the team with people, groups, or other stakeholders outside of the team. Think of Connectors as "boundary spanners," who ensure good working relationships between the team and "outsiders."