

P2P Learning | Ideate: Tasks, Requirements and Personas

Vedant B, Tommy N and Himani P

Content

Sr	Section	Page #
1	Introduction	1
2	Persona & Task Examples	1
3	Task Analysis	5
4	Requirements	7
5	Conclusion	7
6	References	8
7	Appendices	9

1. Introduction

From our initial surveying, we received 44 fully completed respondents to our questionnaires regarding the participants’ perspectives and needs in collaborative learning (CL). We collected a mixture of objective and subjective quantitative and qualitative data. The data were analyzed using summary statistics and thematic analysis via affinity diagramming (Bahel V, N Tommy, P Himani, n.d.). See Appendix A and B for reference figures and data. To further explore our data, this report presents two main personas that have emerged from the analysis of our data. These personas are supported by three task examples that illustrate, in detail, their characteristics, behaviours, motivations, and frustrations. Those task examples are then analyzed—providing insight into the core requirements that need to be addressed in the design stage.

2. Personas & Task Examples

2.1 Primary

“ I can study really hard but if I can just find the right people to study with, I can learn way more and make better use of my time. ”

Studious Student
Alencia, 22
 3rd year undergrad
 Computer Science, UBC

Behaviours

- Regularly studies and stay on top of their work to the best of their ability
- Tries to connect with nearby classmates in-person or via class portals (i.e., Canvas, Piazza)
- Teach or talk through her work to strengthen her understanding of her learning materials

Motivations

- Have limited time and wants to optimize learning collaboratively in groups
- To connect with people sharing similar learning styles, interests, and expectations
- To collaborate with knowledgeable people with strong work ethics and aligned exptations
- To deepen connection within academia

Pain Points

- Working with friends is distracting and unproductive
- Wasting time finding suitable study buddies
- Making sacrifices to meet school demands

Skills

Communication	75%
School Competency	86%
Work Ethics	82%
Software	42%
Learning	25%
Teaching	62%
Organisation	65%

Attitude

Stress	66%
Will to learn	80%
Will to work	73%
Ambition	90%
Patience	33%
Open-Minded	28%
Insecure	43%

Alencia is 22 years old—about the age of a typical 3rd-year undergraduate. We chose this age because it sits within our most common age group where 63.9% of all respondents are between 21-25 years old. We believe a 3rd year undergraduate age is appropriate to embody an individual who has had the opportunity to work with a variety of groups and has since refined their perception and needs—knowing very well who they work well and poorly with. The Computer Science major is chosen to align with the most commonly responded major (39.9%) from our convenience sampling.

Alencia represents the ideal student to partake in CL with. Although our data, unfortunately, does not provide direct insight into our participant's personalities, it does at least inform us who our participants generally want to work with. We made the assumption that our participants are likely seeking peers that share attributes that resemble what they, themselves, envision to also possess. We do not think this is unreasonable since people generally want to work with others who align with their interests and values. From our thematic analysis affinity diagramming, we identified three themes that encompass what an effective peer in CL would look like: knowledgeable, strong work ethics, and good compatibility.

Ignoring the duplicates and no-responses, we have 61.0% (25/41) of respondents valuing work ethics. This theme encompasses strong participation, good communication, willingness to learn, and organisational skills. Within this theme, 52.0% (13/25) of those respondents value participants who participate and contribute; this represents the strongest sub-category of this theme. Good communication, willingness to learn, and organisational skills follow with 32.0%, 20.0%, and 2.5%, respectively.

In regards to how technology could aid our participants, a large 90.9% (30/33) of our participants focus on some sort of matching; this refers to utilizing technology to better optimize how a user can be connected with another peer for CL—specifically over some attributes. The most common attribute notes matching peers via classes—18.2% (6/33). This further ties into how 39.0% (16/41) of our participants want to work with compatible peers—particularly those with a good attitude (6/16) and can easily get along with (6/16).

We portrayed Alencia as a fairly competent student who optimizes her schedule really well. With such a busy schedule, we believe Alencia will struggle to exceed in every aspect of her ambitious goals and expectations. Therefore, Alencia does not want to waste any time working with peers that do not help her achieve her academic goals. Although Alencia possesses the attributes she wants in a CL peer, she is what we believe to be the typical persona because she cannot connect with a peer that aligns with her in an accessible manner. Alencia's mentality can be further understood in the following two task examples.

TE 1: Alencia #1

Alencia is a 3rd-year undergraduate in Computer Science. She is hardworking but extremely busy. Alencia's ambition has her schedule jam packed with five courses, personal projects, extra-curricular, and interview preparations. Aware of her limited time, Alencia stays really organized and keeps up with her study plan. Although she tends to stay on top of her work, some of her course materials and assignments can be fairly challenging—taking up much of her time. To optimize her time, Alencia believes that she can accomplish much more if she can fill in the gaps in her knowledge by learning collaboratively in a group.

Alencia has a history of working with bad group mates in projects as well as distracting peers from her own social network. She has tried to reach out to her classmates in-person and through the social platforms provided by her classes, like Piazza and Canvas, but they never really gain much traction. In the case when she does manage to connect with some classmates to collaboratively learn, she often finds that the misalignment of expectations, interests, and work ethics can be very taxing on her mental health and performance. With difficulty finding the right people to work with, she is unsure if it is worth it to continue to use her precious time in order to look for peers that match her needs as well her peers' needs.

TE 2: Alencia #2

Alencia enjoys teaching. She often plays both teacher and learner roles in CL. She loves a vibrant environment where everyone is discussing concepts, coming up with knowledgeable additions to the discussion solving problems collaboratively. She hates inactive members in the group. She wishes to collaborate with people who are smart, communicative, focused, committed and cooperative. However, she fails to find such people. It is difficult for her to assess profiles and information of people whom she meets in class or finds on social media. Thus, when she collaborates with them, she often finds the CL experience un-satisfactory. There's simply no relevant information about them. She wishes she could get information about the people before collaborating.

2.2 Secondary



Edward represents the new undergraduate population because we believe that group is a

significant user of a platform that facilitates CL, yet different in nature. New students might be overwhelmed with what they are being offered. At the same time, they might not have enough friends since they moved to a new place. A CL-facilitator might be a great advantage to them. Additionally, Edward also represents the population that is not very good at communication. He often gets nervous when he speaks and often in-turn makes mistakes. Teaching in CL space might be a difficult job for him. However, he is very interested in still being in CL space and learning. He believes such experiences will help him overcome his hurdles.

Based on the descriptive answers we collected in response to “What do you look for in peers to effectively collaborate and learn with?”, many participants responded that they look for peers who are communicative, knowledgeable and have the will to learn. Although Edward has the will to learn but clearly lacks the other two characteristics making him not the very ideal person that people look for in CL. Via this persona, we wanted to address this group and try to fit them in and solace for them.

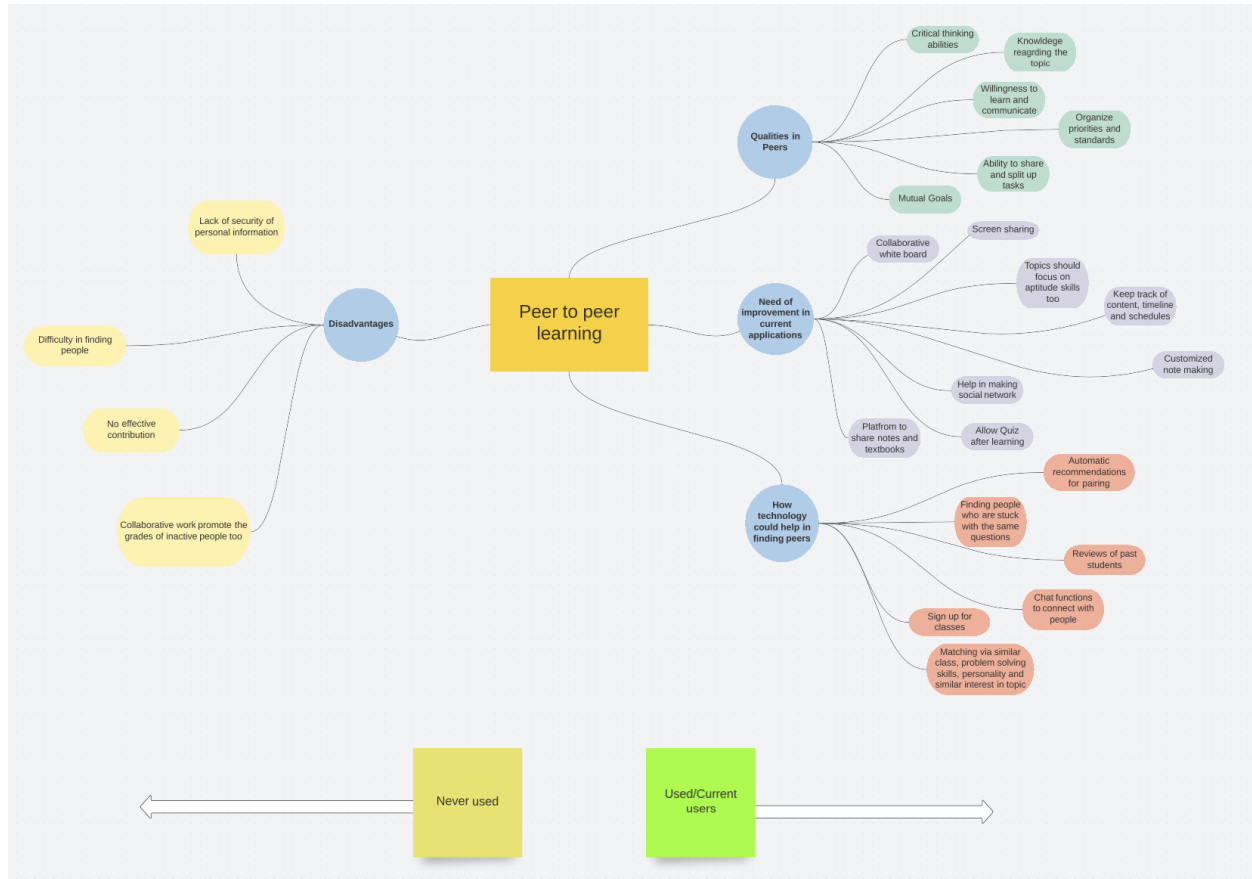
TE 3: Edward #1

Edward has taken PSYC101, an introduction to psychology, this term. He struggles with the concept and is looking for someone who can teach him. He is interested in finding people who have knowledge of the subject and wishes to study together with them. Although Edward doesn't have much to add in such a collaborative learning session as he struggles with even the basic concepts. Also communication is a barrier for him. He is aware that he is not doing well but wishes to work on it. He tends to get distracted when working alone and thus believes that having some help would be of great help. But Edward struggles on how he can find people to collaborate with. He is afraid of asking his classmates because he is shy and embarrassed of speaking in public or to new people. He still tries putting an anonymous post on piazza asking for peer-tutors but he is unsure what he can offer in-return. He questions if there are people who would be simply interested in teaching and teach him some concepts. A platform to find those particular people would have been of great help to Edward.

3. Task Analysis

The below image describes the task analysis from the survey responders highlighting four main domains with each having problem identification/solution. The right side of the image describes the responses of people who have used/currently using collaborative peer to peer learning. The drawbacks of using collaborative peer to peer learning are reported on the left side of the image. We followed four steps to task analysis i.e., Identifying the target problem, Identifying the prerequisite information, Breaking the answers, Confirming between group members (through group opinion). Four Identified

domains are 1) Quality in peers, 2) Need of improvement in current applications, 3) How technology could help in finding peers, and 4) Disadvantages (these were shared by people who had never or rarely experienced CL). The below image depicts the underlying themes (it could be a problem or solution) for each domain.



As seen in the image there are some potential issues with matching however it is broad term as it denotes matching as per the location, time, personality, habits, and goals. Some of the points like personality and habits could be difficult to match in our project as it requires minute cognitive and daily activities assessment in order to understand those two constructs. Location and time is something that we could draw attention to for the next steps. Collaborative white board, screen sharing option and chat functions are very important in terms of using any communication technologies, so we felt some things around this to be worked on. Information on reviews of past students and quiz making helps in getting constant feedback to students in terms of their progression, so this could be focused too.

Some people were quite fuzzy about sharing personal information which is quite tricky and requires more resources, so we are not sure if this could be solved. However, our efforts will be to minimize this risk by looking at the readily available solutions. Others were lack of identifying people and less or no contribution from peers. For this, we believe that effective solutions targeting matching outcomes would help to solve this problem.

4. Requirements

4.1: Information about peers to assess before matching

One of the key requirements that we could identify is the need of users to have information about their potential matches. If they wish to collaborate with someone, they would want information about them relevant to their learning habits and subject. Some information like their expectations, CL characteristics (learner/teacher), knowledge of the topic, etc would be a great help. Currently used methods (social media platforms) fail in meeting this requirement (Alencia and Edward both struggled with this).

4.2: Have opportunity to utilize different learning strategies (listening, teaching, discussing, etc)

Every individual is different. Some are communicative, some are not. Some are knowledgeable, some are not. As a result, some might just want to be a listener (like Edward). Some might know all the concepts and just want to teach (like Alencia). Or some might just be interested in having general discussions. Based on this, we identify one requirement i.e. how CL can be facilitated while meeting these user requirements. Furthermore, part of learning strategies could be to have a social accountability network. Working in teams may be what someone like Edward may need to strive for his target goals.

4.3 Learnings beyond the course work

Although this was not addressed as heavily, our team wants to prioritize this to ensure the success of people like Alencia and Edward. We believe that if we can facilitate an environment where users are able to learn beyond what they are doing for their classes, then the learnings that they achieve for their classes are further refined and solidified. This provides our users with lifelong learning and greater fulfillment—where users can continue to grow and even return to assist others along similar paths.

5. Conclusion

Despite having limited data, we thoroughly utilized our quantitative and qualitative data to better empathize with our participants and potential users. Furthermore, we utilized our team's own experience in working with undergraduate and graduate students at our respective post-secondary institutions to contribute to our work. The results were two personas along with task examples that supported both: Alencia, the primary studious student archetype, and Edward, the secondary trying student archetype.

References

Bahel V, N Tommy, P Himani. (n.d.). *P2PLearning Define (Data & Analysis)*. Google Docs.

Appendices

Appendix A: Figures

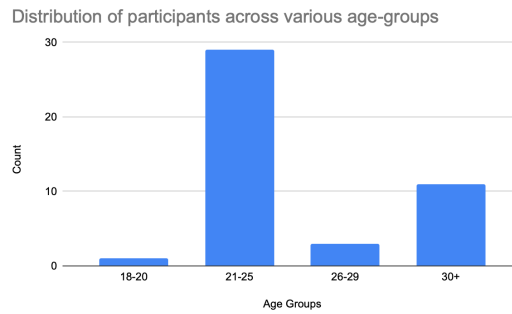


Figure 1: Age Distribution of survey participants

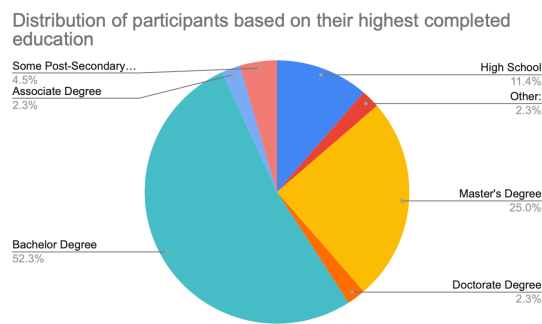


Figure 2a: Highest Completed Education of survey participants

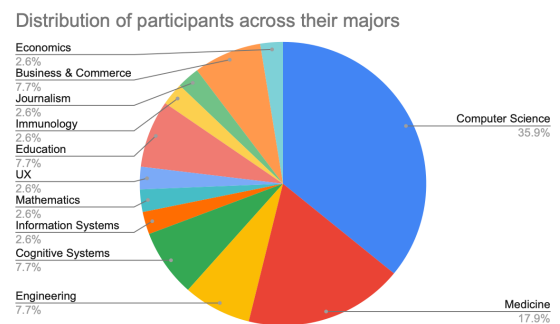


Figure 2b: Major or Program specialties of survey participants whose highest level of education was degree/diploma based

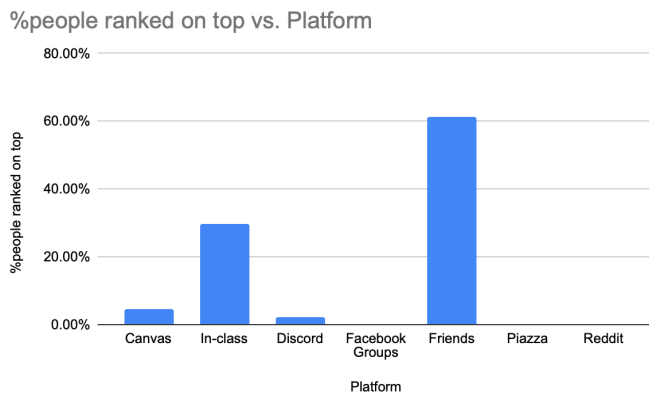


Figure 3: Top ranked peer-matching platform by participants

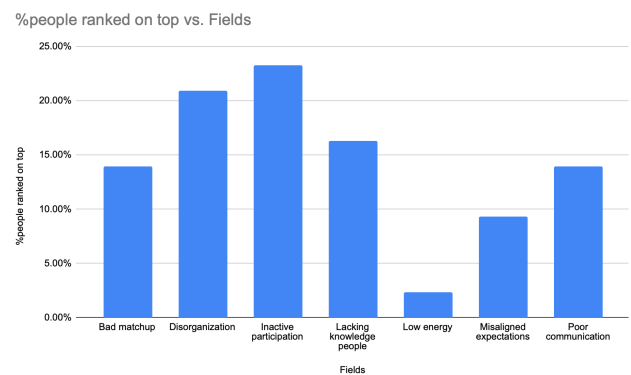


Figure 4: Top ranked reason for RPT failure by participants

Appendix B: Affinity diagram for descriptive answers

B.1: Affinity Diagram Legend

What do you look for in peers to effectively collaborate and learn with?

How could technology do more to improve your learning or teaching with other individuals?

How could technology help you find suitable peers to collaboratively learn with?

How could technology help you find suitable peers to collaboratively learn with?

B.2: What do you look for in peers to effectively collaborate and learn with?

WORK ETHICS

THEY ARE WILLING PARTICIPATE, CONTRIBUTE, WORK

- dedication**
 - Dedication
- organize; good effort**
 - Organized and good effort
- will to work; organized; comm**
 - Willingness to communicate, effectively organize priorities and standards.
- will to work**
 - Not much, just if they're interested in collaborating
- good comm, will to work, similar expectations**
 - Good communication, willingness to work, similar expectations
- will to participate & contribute**
 - Willing to participate and contribute to the learning process
- comm; will to work; enjoy studies**
 - Listening, focus, practice, enjoying studies
- eager to work**
 - Eagerness to work
- make effort; easy to comm**
 - They actively make the effort and are easy to communicate with.
- participation**
 - Participation
- hardworking; up to date**
 - Hard working, up to date with class material
- team work**
 - Team work
- will to work;**
 - Commitment, integrity, flexibility

THEY ARE WILLING TO LEARN

- will to learn**
 - Willingness to learn
- knowledgeable; will to learn**
 - How knowledgeable they are about the topic, and their willingness to learn and understand a topic
- eager to learn; similar goals**
 - Eagerness to learn and similar goals on what to learn
- will to learn, teach, patience**
 - Willingness to learn and teach, and patience
- want to learn**
 - They actually want to learn

THEY HAVE GOOD COMMUNICATION

- comm**
 - Communication
- comm; critical thinking; attitude**
 - Good communication, critical thinking, and helpful attitude.
- will to work; organized; comm**
 - Willingness to communicate, effectively organize priorities and standards.
- comm; get along**
 - We communicate well together and can vibe with each other
- comm**
 - Communication
- comm & knowledge**
 - Communication and knowledge
- will to work; good comm**
 - They actively make the effort and are easy to communicate with.
- compatibility; comm**
 - Compatibility in communication

THEY ARE ORGANIZED

- organize; good effort**
 - Organized and good effort
- will to work; organized**
 - Willingness to communicate, effectively organize priorities and standards.
- hardworking; up to date**
 - Hard working, up to date with class material

COMPATABILITY

THEY HAVE A GOOD ATTITUDE

#8
comm; critical thinking; attitude
• Good communication, critical thinking, and helpful attitude.

#11
attitude & similarity
• Mental. Common ground.

#26
comm; will to work; enjoy studies
• Listening, focus, practice, enjoying studies

#30
will to learn, teach, patience
• Willingness to learn and teach, and patience

#32
attitude
• Right attitude and mindset, humility regarding what we learn and willing to keep each other accountable in learning

#39
similar work ethic; open-minded; supportive
• similar work ethic, open-minded, collaborators, supportive

WE GET ALONG WELL

#3
get along; will to work
• People who I get along with and know are willing to put in effort and work.

#5
similar goals; delegation; teaching; patience
• Mutual goals. Ability to share and split up tasks to then re-teach to each other. Patience and understanding.

#12
comm; get along
• We communicate well together and can vibe with each other

#13
compatibility; will to work
• A mainly a good first impression, how responsive they are and interested they seem

#14
similar work ethic; compatibility
• Similar work ethics & comparability

#16
get along
• Can I get along with them as friends

WE HAVE SIMILAR GOALS & INTERESTS

#22
similar interests
• Similar interests

#37
interested; similar goals
• Engagement, interest in topic, and focused with the same goals

#19
eager to learn; similar goals
• Eagerness to learn and similar goals on what to learn

#23
available
• Availability

OUR TIME ALIGNS

KNOWLEDGE

THEY CAN FILL SOME KNOWLEDGE GAP

#31
fill gap; good comm
• others to cover each other's weaknesses and communicate effectively

#44
smarter; fill gap
• Someone who is smarter than me and can help me with my gap in knowledge

THEY ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE

#10
knowledge; helpful
• Knowledge and helpfulness

#18
knowledgeable; will to learn
• How knowledgeable they are about the topic, and their willingness to learn and understand a topic

#40
knowledge; studious
• Knowledgeable and studious

#43
comm & knowledge
• Communication and knowledge

THEY ARE LEARNING ALONG MY LEVEL

#35
same topic; similar level
• I look for peers who are interested in learning a specific subject and who have a similar level of understanding to me.

#24
same topic; similar level
• Students at a similar level in the course that I can collaborate with

B.3: How could technology do more to improve your learning or teaching with other individuals?

PRODUCTIVITY

PEOPLE

TECH HELPS ME BETTER COMMUNICATE

I WANT TO CREATE BETTER CONNECTIONS

quizzing & learning tools
 • Certain tools could be helpful, like group ank(?) Or similar quizzing/synthesis type review tools
 #21

projector to share
 • Having a projector that allows someone to share their laptop screen is helpful.
 #8

accessible across devices
 • Improved user experiences, compatibility with different devices, accessibility
 #14

planning
 • Helping to scaffold the collaborative learning session to give it more structure
 #32

timing, review
 • Could help with timing and guidance on how long to discuss a particular topic. Could have question prompts after a session of discussion to review material.
 #37

solve and explain
 • Solving problems, explaining solutions
 #10

match on learning styles
 • Match people that fit your way of learning with surveys and tests
 #7

intimate connections
 • Create more intimate connection
 #22

broaden social & learning network
 • The technology helps me to reach out the ppl who I can't reach and learn from them
 #23

matching
 • By helping to find the right match
 #27

match on location
 • Technology can connect people who are not in the same physical/geographic location.
 #35

PEOPLE ARE LARGER BARRIERS THAN TECHNOLOGY

I WANT TO KEEP TRACK OF OUR TIME

scheduling, timing, expectations
 • Keep track of our schedules, keep us on time, list our expectations
 #21

schedule meetings, find info
 • help schedule meetings, help find information easily
 #39

tech is fine, people are lazy
 • It's already super easy. All the information is out there and open source. You can google anything. Maybe better information architecture, or systems to keep organized. I would say people being consistent is a greater issue. The tech is fine. People are lazy.
 #11

prefer in-person
 • I honestly prefer in person
 #16

people don't want to do this
 • I think it's more of lack of willingness
 #17

PRODUCTIVITY

PEOPLE

TECH HELPS ME BETTER COMMUNICATE

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people don't want to do this
 • I think it's more of lack of willingness
 #17

B.4: How could technology help you find suitable peers to collaboratively learn with?

MATCHING

BY LOCATION

match on location
 • Location matching
 #38

platform for like-minded people
 • Platform for like-minded individuals in your school or area.
 #11

BY CLASS

match by class & topic
 • Match via classes and topic
 #2

connecting with class; peer review
 • introducing classmates? Reviews from past students/friends on if they were a good peer to study with.
 #15

study groups with classmates
 • Way to sign up for study groups based on class
 #6

class/lab social network
 • Social media for classes/labs I am in.
 #34

connect same class; same interests
 • Making groups with people in the same class(es), interests, etc. So that you don't have to reach out and find the right people
 #10

BY AVAILABILITY

match on ability and time
 • It could help pair up students with similar ability levels and similar availabilities.
 #24

matching on interests & time
 • Finding matching topics of study interests, and time availability
 #9

BY WORK ETHICS

match on similar personality & work ethics
 • match people according to similar personality and work habits
 #39

find serious study people
 • Find people who are serious about studying for a while
 #41

BY ABILITY

match on pain points
 • Might be interesting to match students based on what they are stuck on so that they figure it out together.
 #19

match with smarter & willing people
 • It could help match me with people who are smarter than me and willing to help
 #44

match on ability and time
 • It could help pair up students with similar ability levels and similar availabilities.
 #24

connect on similar study area; similar level of understanding
 • Technology could cluster people who are interested in similar areas of study (e.g. NP-completeness or variational inference rather than general subjects such as computer science or statistics) as well as match people with similar current levels of understanding.
 #35

BY INTERESTS

connecting on classes
 • A dedicated group such as a Facebook group or group chat on Messenger, or some kind of platform where students can say "Hey I am from class [course code] looking to study X. Anyone want to get together?"
 #28

connect on similar study area; similar level of understanding
 • Technology could cluster people who are interested in similar areas of study (e.g. NP-completeness or variational inference rather than general subjects such as computer science or statistics) as well as match people with similar current levels of understanding.
 #35

share same interests
 • It helps me provide a platform to share the same interests with other peers
 #23

matching on interests & time
 • Finding matching topics of study interests, and time availability.
 #9

connect same class; same interests
 • Making groups with people in the same class(es), interests, etc. So that you don't have to reach out and find the right people
 #10

BY SIMILAIRTY

platform for like-minded people
 • Platform for like-minded individuals in your school or area.
 #11

connect with like-minded people & similar needs
 • Making it easier to connect with different groups to learn together would be a great way - essentially a way to connect like-minded people with like-minded needs
 #18

match on similar background & knowledge
 • To find people who have similar technical background and knowledge as myself
 #8

match on goals
 • matching according to specific goals
 #31

connecting through network
 • Connections through networks, finding similar social groups?
 #14

I WANT TO SOMETHING TO FACILITATE GOOD MATCHING

sort people by preference
 • By sorting people according to preferences
 #27

stronger match
 • More closely matchf
 #1

tinder-style match
 • Could use a matching sort of process, similar to tinder
 #12

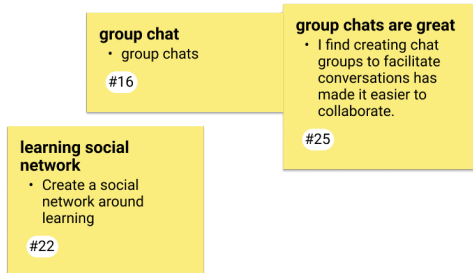
automatic matching
 • Automatic pairing, collab platforms
 #21

find matching
 • By finding suitable match
 #40

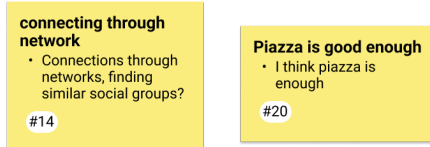
facilitate matching
 • Making a survey or test system designed to match peers together
 #7

LEARNING NETWORK

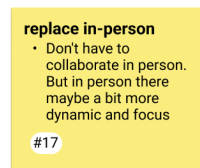
I LIKE GROUP CHATS



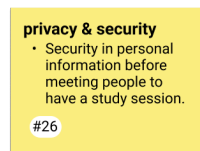
I WANT TO CONNECT THROUGH A NETWORK



I DON'T HAVE TO MEET IN-PERSON



I WANT PRIVACY BEFORE MEETING PEOPLE



B.5: Is there anything else you would like to share regarding collaborative group learning?

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

imbalanced efforts; freeloaders

- I find a chief complaint is that there are inactive group members which increases the work load of students who actually contribute. But eventually the benefits are shared by the entire group which is what probably promotes the inactive behavior.

#25

finding good people to work with

- Finding people that are positive, focused, and cooperative.

#26

prefer committed people

- It's extremely helpful if everyone is committed

#10

equal responsibility to avoid freeloaders

- Important that peers share equally or near equally so one person does not take on the burden of teaching or educating while others are benefitting freely.

#5

need good participants

- Need quality participants

#2

INDEPEDENT STUDY

prefer individual study

- I do not typically like collaborative group learning and prefer individual study.

#9

prefer self study

- I generally do not like collaborative group learning, as I find studying myself is more effective

#44

HUMAN INTERATION

TITLE

- It's important to have collaborative learning to enable people to develop skills to interact with humans outside of the internet

#14

ORGANIATION

organization & structure

- Collaborative group learning can benefit from being organized (i.e. having a specific assignment to focus on, or having a set schedule of topics)

#24

willing to learn; don't generalize topics

- Learner must be willing to learn and teacher must not over Generalize topics.

#30

roles are important

- Roles are important. If it is a lab or research paper, having clear roles help facilitate and understand everyone's responsibilities.

#11

APP MAY BE USEFUL

app may be helpful

- I think it'll be helpful to have this app

#40

B.6: Affinity Diagram Grouping Categories

What do you look for in peers to effectively collaborate and learn with?	How could technology do more to improve your learning or teaching with other individuals?	How could technology help you find suitable peers to collaboratively learn with?	Is there anything else you would like to share regarding collaborative group learning?
(13 <i>sticky notes</i>) They are willing to participate, contribute, work	(5) I want to create better connections	(6) I want something to facilitate good matching	(5) Shared responsibility
(8) They have good communication	(8) Technology helps me better communicate	(6) Connecting by classes	(3) Organization
(6) They have a good attitude	(4) Technology facilitates digital and remote learning	(5) Connecting by similarity	(2) Prefer independent study
(6) We get along well	(5) I want to share and access information	(4) Connecting by ability	(1) App may be useful
(5) They are willing to learn	(3) I want to keep track of our time	(4) Connecting by interests	(1) Human interaction
(4) They are knowledgeable	(5) I want strong collaborative tools	(3) I want to connect through a network	
(3) We have similar goals and interests	(3) People are larger barriers than technology	(3) Connecting by work ethics	
(3) They are organized	(1) I want to track our learning	(2) I like group chats	
(2) They can fill some knowledge gap		(2) Connecting by location	
(2) They are learning along my level		(2) Connecting by availability	
(1) Our time aligns		(1) I want privacy before meeting people	
		(1) I don't have to meet in-person	