

lagrp11

Groupings




The **Grouping Tool** is different to other activities in that its role is to modify the behaviour of other tools rather than conduct a learner activity in its own right.


The addition of a Grouping Tool to a sequence allows other activities to run in *small group mode*, rather than as a *whole class activity*. The Grouping Tool has no properties page of its own, and is configured by using the Properties Inspector.

There are four types of groups:

- Number of groups; learners are distributed into a specific number of groups.
- Number of learners; groups are created to facilitate a particular number of learners in each group.
- Chosen groups; groups are defined in Monitoring view once the sequence has started.
- Student selected grouping; students can select from a list of groups created by the author.



Animated Tutorial
This animation explains how to create and use the **Grouping Objects**.



Grouping and Branching
You can also use a Grouping Tool in conjunction with a **Branching Activity**.



Grouping Sequence Errors

A common mistake is to set an activity to use a Grouping Tool *before* the Grouping Tool has occurred in the sequence. If you do this, it will result in an error when you try and run your sequence. Make sure that no activities in your sequence use a Grouping Tool *before* the Tool appears in the sequence.

Grouping in the Authoring Environment



This animation shows how to use Grouping Activities in a LAMS sequence.

Grouping activities are placed by selecting the Grouping icon from the grouping from the Sequence Management at the top of the environment, then placing the Grouping Object on the Authoring space. Unlike other activities, double-clicking the Grouping activity on the authoring space will not open a new Properties Window, but will instead open the [Properties Inspector](#), which is where all settings for a grouping object are changed.

The name of the grouping can be specified by "Title" - this is the text that will be shown in the "Grouping" drop-down menu in all other tools. It is possible to have more than one Grouping per sequence, and to have different activity tools use different Groupings.



It is useful to give your groupings descriptive titles in this circumstance, as this makes choosing the correct style of grouping from the Properties for an activity easier.

In LAMS 2.1 and above, sequence Authors can create custom names for the groups.

Grouping Types

Grouping can be set in a variety of ways to suit the classroom environment

Random Groupings

In Random grouping mode, the author can either choose to set the number of total groups needed, or the number of learners to be within each group. In either of these circumstances, the learners will be randomly allocated to their groups within the sequence, and they will stay within these groups for any of the activities that are assigned to that particular Grouping activity.

Choose in Monitor

Grouping can also be set to Chosen mode by selecting "Chosen" from the drop down menu of "Grouping type". In Chosen mode, Learners must be assigned to groups through the Monitoring environment. The Learners can then be allocated to groups in the Monitor window by clicking on the "Go" button next to "Choose grouping" under the heading "Required Tasks" on the [Lesson tab](#). (This is described in more detail in the [monitoring section](#) below.)

Learner's Choice

This option allows learners to choose their own groups from the learners participating in the sequence.

There are two modes of Learner's choice grouping:

- Fixed number of groups - the Author can specify how many groups exist in the sequence. LAMS can also force the group sizes to be equal. Depending on the number of learners, the group sizes will scale up and down.
- Fixed number of learners - the Author specifies how many learners are to be in each group. LAMS then creates however many groups are necessary.

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of the LAMS interface. The left screenshot is titled "Learner Selected Groupings" and contains the text: "Please select a group. Some groups may not be available if they reached the maximum number of members." Below this text is a table with two columns: "Groups" and an empty column. The table has two rows: "Group 1" and "Group 2". Each row has a "Choose" button to its right. The right screenshot is titled "Learner Selected Group" and shows a table with two columns: "Groups" and an empty column. The table has two rows: "Group 1" and "Group 2". The "Group 1" row shows "Four T" in the second column, and the "Group 2" row shows "Mary I" and "Two T" in the second column. Below the screenshots are two text boxes: "LAMS displays the list of groups to choose from." and "Once they choose, Learners see who else".

Grouping in the Monitoring Environment

In the monitoring environment, when the Grouping Activity is opened, from either the [Sequence tab](#) or the [Learners tab](#), a new window opens displaying the group names and the Learners assigned to those groups.

Creating Custom Groups

The image shows a screenshot of the LAMS Grouping screen. At the top, it says "Grouping" and "General Instructions: Place the lesson participants in their groups. Initially you can add and remove users, but once the grouping is used (that is, a participant starts an activity that uses the grouping) you will not be able to remove users from groups. If you try to remove someone from a group and they will not remove check their progress - if they start using the group while you are on the screen you will not get any errors but you will not be able to remove them from their group. You will still be able to add users to groups." Below this is a "To create a group, simply click the '+' button in the group functions. To remove a group, click the '-' button either on the group panel itself or in the group functions (deletes the last group added). Repeat as required. To assign learners to groups, simply drag their names into the appropriate group panel. The changes are saved immediately." The main area shows a list of learners on the left: "Learners without a Group: Mary Morgan, Four Text, One Text, Three Text, Two Text". To the right are two group panels: "Group 1" and "Group 2", each with a "Learners" list and a "-" button. At the bottom, there are "Group functions: + -" and a "Finished" button.

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w of the Grouping Selection screen in Monitor.

If a sequence author has specified that a Grouping activity should be chosen in the monitoring environment, the Monitor will see that a grouping selection must be made in the [Required Tasks](#) section of the [Lessons tab](#). Alternatively, if custom grouping has been selected, the Grouping Icon on the [Sequence tab](#) can be double-clicked to open the same screen.

Instructions for Selecting Groups: Place the lesson participants in their groups. Initially Learners can be added and removed from groups, but once the grouping activity is activated (that is, a learner starts an activity that uses the grouping) the groups cannot be changed. To create a new group, the monitor should type in group name and click *Add Group*. This should be repeated as often as required. To add Learners to a group, the Monitor selects them from the list of students in the second column and then clicks *Add Selected to Groups*.

Custom Groupings Using Integrations



Please read this section if you are running LAMS integrated with another LMS.

When running a LAMS-Only environment (i.e. not using an [LMS integration](#), LAMS will display all of the learners who have access to the sequence in the Grouping page. This allows sequence monitors to create and assign groups *before* beginning the sequence.

However, when LAMS is integrated with another LMS, such as Moodle or Sakai, the Custom Grouping screen will only display the names of the Learners who have opened the LAMS sequence from the integrated LMS. In practice, this means that **monitors are unable to create and assign groups to Learners using an integration before the Learners begin the sequence.** The Learners using the Integration module must access the sequence from the link in the integration so their information is added to LAMS.

For more information, view [this](#) discussion on the LAMS Community.
