

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page consists of three overlapping circles of varying sizes, each with a dark blue center and a lighter blue outer ring. Two thin blue lines intersect at the top right, forming a large 'V' shape that frames the circles.

Design Document

An Online Novel Study for Bud, Not Buddy, by Christopher Paul Curtis.

I have detailed my decision-making process for my online course design and organization. Included is my rationale for the instructional design of a 5th. Grade online novel study. I detail the application of current online pedagogical theory to specific design decisions throughout the course.

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Overview

In designing an online novel study on Bud, Not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis for my fifth grade students, I wanted to keep certain learning objectives clear to both myself and my students.

Learning Objectives:

1. I want students to monitor their own progress of using comprehension skills (reading strategies) in order to guide and accelerate their reading development.
 - a. **Enhancing meaning:** *How does the learning experience engage students in challenging learning (rigor) via:*
 - b. Modeling purposeful response activities to help students organize, synthesize, and hold meaning while reading.
2. Engendering competence: *How does the learning experience create an understanding that students are becoming more effective in learning they value and perceive as authentic via:*
 - a. Monitoring each student's progress to guide and accelerate reading strategy development.
3. Fostering interdependence and group success via:
 - a. Modeling excellent advanced reading strategies and problem solving skills when decoding, interpreting, and synthesizing text (before, during, and after reading).

Audience, Context, and Purpose:

I teach 5th Grade at Rolling Hills Elementary School in Aurora, CO. We are located in the Cherry Creek School District. Rolling Hills is a year-round school with 736 students. 12% Asian American, 8.3% African American, 6.9% Hispanic American, and 72.8% are Caucasian. Seven percent of our student population qualifies for free and reduced lunch. In my particular class this year, forty percent of my students are African American students and twelve percent are Hispanic.

It makes sense to me that in order to create an effective online course experience for my fifth grade students, I need to take our current class format (face-to-face) and successfully blend authentic, creative, and culturally responsive online activities. I feel that I can accomplish this using Edu 2.0, an online learning management system. Within this, I can embed web 2.0 tools such as blogging, wikis, etc... both synchronously and asynchronously.

The purpose of this online novel study is to present my students with another, more authentic way of interacting with a text. Simultaneously, I want students to monitor their reading

comprehension, use of strategies, and understanding of themselves as readers. Since I am teaching 21st Century students, I hope to accomplish this using 21st Century tools.

Instructional Design

The overall instructional design for my online novel study is a combination of a web-facilitated and blended/hybrid course. I have organized my course into week-long sections where students will be reading and responding to various chapters. In the early stage of my course, “Stage One: Course Beginnings” (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, page 10) I want to use my learning management system to facilitate what I am already doing in my face-to-face meetings. For example, I spend the early parts of a new novel study getting to know my students as readers, familiarizing my students with the novel and our learning goals, and establishing structure and routines for the study. The later stages of my course, I plan on using the management system to blend both online and face-to-face delivery of the course’s content. For example, I will be delivering more content (i.e.: assignments, activities, etc...) online, and using our face-to-face meetings to troubleshoot technology issues and/or extend the learning done online.

Here is an outline of our online novel study of Bud, Not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis. The goal is to finish the novel and all online activities in four weeks.

Stage 1: Course Beginnings	Introduction to Mr. Neibauer' Online Homeroom
	Online Learning Survey
	The Great Depression
	Chapter Title Pictures
Stage 2: Early Middle	Chapters 1-3 Activities
	Literary Devices Mini-Lesson
	Chapters 4-7 Activities
	Literary Devices Mini-Lesson
Stage 3: Late Middle	Literary Element: Characterization
	Photographs of The Great Depression
	Chapters 8-9 Activities
	Chapters 10-11 Activities
Stage 4: Closing Week(s)	Chapters 12-13 Activities
	Chapters 14-16 Activities
	Chapters 17-19 Activities

Course Stages

Throughout my online novel study, I plan on attending to both the learner/student and the content knowledge. However, as each stage of the course is designed to slowly release teacher control and allow for more student autonomy, I plan on differentiating for the learner and how the content is delivered.

Stage 1: Course Beginnings

In the beginning of my Bud, Not Buddy novel study, I will present the online management system as a web tool that will facilitate what we discuss in the classroom. (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, page 10) describes the goal for “Stage One” should be to “launch the course well [by] laying the groundwork for a learning community in which learners and faculty support one another in the accomplishment of course goals.” Therefore, I will dedicate the first week of online study to teaching the students how to operate the management system and create an online social network via the system. The content will be course goals and learning objectives for each student. I want students to understand my online novel study requirements, and how they differ from a traditional face-to-face novel study.

The National Standards for Quality Online Teaching (iNACOL) ensure that all students not only have access to high-quality, digital education, but are successful. This is also a key goal in my course design. I designed Stage One so that it illustrates “the primary concepts and structures of effective online instructions and is able to create learning experiences to enable student success” (iNACOL Standard A, 2011, page 4). I want my students to immediately become familiar with the course goals and objectives and know what he/she will be able to do by the end of the course.

Stage 2: Early Middle

Still early in my online novel study course, I want students to “become deeply engaged in the content” (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, page 10). The designed the second week so that students become familiar with the routines established for studying Bud, Not Buddy online. For example, Stage 2 covers chapters 1-7 in Bud, Not Buddy. Within each chapter are vocabulary, comprehension questions, questions for discussion and a mini-lesson focusing on a certain literary device the author uses. The repetition of reading a chapter, studying vocabulary, discussing various questions, and then studying a literary device, will be constant throughout this online course.

Simultaneously, the learners will strengthen our class learning community online through Web 2.0 tools, such as Wiki's, Voice Thread podcasts, image-rich videos. My students have so much access to online information. I want my online course to funnel this plethora of information so that I can create a digital classroom that Richardson, 2010 calls one of "seamless transfer of information; of collaborative, individualized learning; and of active participation by all members of the class" (page, 149). While this has always been my goal *in the classroom*, I now want to take this *into our digital space*.

I designed Stage Two so that the students "understand and [are] able to use a range of technologies...that effectively support [their] learning and engagement in the online environment" (iNACOL Standard B, 2011, page 5). There are so many powerful web tools for classrooms, yet I chose those I felt best enhanced *everyone's* learning.

Stage 3: Late Middle

It is in the third stage that I begin to relinquish some teacher control and move my web-facilitated face-to-face course to an actual blended/hybrid online course. The learner will be engaging with the majority of the novel's themes and concepts online. The literary element of *characterization* will become a central part of our online discourse and group projects. The backdrop of The Great Depression will now move at the forefront of our learning, as we explore issues of racism and prejudice during this time period.

This is also where my course objective of *enhancing meaning* becomes more explicit. Will Richardson (2010) calls them "big shifts." For example, content will be a "social, collaborative construction of meaning" (page 150). My teaching will be more of a "conversation, not [a] lecture" (page 151), meaning that what ideas I display to my students are not the final word in our learning. I will begin to expect students to take what I have shown/taught them and start a meaningful and complex dialogue. To do this, I will rely more on the Web 2.0 tools that I introduced earlier in the course.

I will also continue to model purposeful activities, helping students organize, synthesize, and hold meaning while they read. My goal for this stage is to "incorporate strategies to encourage active learning, application, interaction, participation, and collaboration in [our] online environment" (iNACOL Standard C, 2011, page 6). This 21st Century learning design model is integrated throughout the entire course, however, I really begin to focus here, in Stage 3, because

my evaluation strategies need to be aligned with my course goals. I want my students to understand that the assessments I create are designed for learning, not solely for evaluation.

Stage 4: Closing Week(s)

By the end of my course, I want students to feel that studying Bud, Not Buddy online was a positive, worthwhile experience. I want my students to reflect on what they have learned throughout the novel, and “accomplish a personalized, customized learning task” (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, page 12). The basic read, vocabulary, comprehension questions, will still be present, but I will expect students to dig deeper into what is being asked, or what is being expressed by the author in the novel. From chapters 12 through the end of the book, the author, Christopher Paul Curtis, begins to develop his “lesson” to his story. He reviews and reflects on what has happened to his main character, Bud, how Bud has changed throughout the story, and how he has resolved various conflicts thus far.

My online novel study will mirror this. I will review what we have learned (course objectives and learning goals) and reflect on how we (as students) have changed throughout this course. I want to know how online learning has enhanced their study of not only Bud, Not Buddy, but themselves as digital learners.

Core Learning Principals

Judith Boettcher (2010) outlines ten core principles that guide the design and delivery of any online course. I designed my online novel study mindful of these principles.

Ten Core Learning Principles	
Principle 1	Every structured learning experience has four elements with the learner at the center.
Principle 2	Learners bring their own personalized and customized knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the experience.
Principle 3	Faculty members are the directors of the learning experience.
Principle 4	All learners do not need to learn all course content; all learners do need to learn the core concepts.
Principle 5	Every learning experience includes the environment or context in which the learner interacts
Principle 6	Every learner has a zone of proximal development that defines the space that a learner is ready to develop into useful knowledge.
Principle 7	Concepts are not words but organized and interconnected knowledge clusters.
Principle 8	Different instruction is required for different learning outcomes.

Principle 9 Everything else being equal, more time on task equals more learning.

Principle 10 We shape our tools, and our tools shape us.

Table 1: From *The Online Teaching Survival Guide* (p. 20), by J.V. Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Principle 2:

In Stage One, I understand that each of my students brings with him/her a certain amount of background knowledge about the content. Therefore, it is important that I “know and understand techniques to plan individualized instruction” (iNACOL Standard I, 2011, p. 13). In relation to the second principle, I therefore, I created certain introductory lessons and activities to capitalize on this. I want to get to know my students as individual learners and I need activities that will provide me data to tailor my instruction. I also wanted the class to create a shared knowledge base of the Great Depression, so I structured a lesson that accomplishes this.

Principle 4:

Within each lesson, there are vocabulary, comprehension questions, questions for discussion, and a literary device. While all present, not everything is required to successfully complete this course. An effective online teacher “knows and understands appropriate tools and technologies to make accommodations to meet student needs” (iNACOL Standard F, 2011, p. 10). The core concepts in each chapter (i.e.: themes and discussion points) are the most important for each student to learn and understand, and therefore need to be made available to all students, despite any learning disability. So, while “all learners do not need to learn the [entire] course content; all learners do need to learn the core concepts [of the novel]” (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, page 20).

For my advanced students, I fully expect that they may not need the repetition of answering comprehension questions because they are not only decoding and interpreting the text; they are synthesizing higher levels of thought about deeper concepts embedded throughout the novel. I want my lessons to “expand student thinking, addressing [their] styles of learning, and provid[ing] avenues for enrichment...” (iNACOL Standard F, 2011, p. 10).

Principle 5:

Reading independently is often a very isolating, but gratifying task. However, as anyone who has been part of a successful book club knows, reading can and should be a social act. “The online teacher plans, designs, and incorporates strategies to encourage active learning, application, interaction, participation, and collaboration” (iNACOL Standard C, 2011, p. 6). I want my students to

read Bud, Not Buddy and complete the various activities aware that they are not only accountable to me as their teacher, but to the rest of the class as a social network. I expect students to regularly contribute to our discussions around various themes and literary devices found in the text. Our online novel study “balances individual, small, and large group activities” while “stimulating...interactions with people and the content resources” (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, page 30).

Principle 6:

I want my course to be universally accessible to every student. Therefore, I have integrated tools within the learning management system that give this access to all. For example, Bud, Not Buddy is a fifth-grade reading level text. Many of my students are reading well below this grade level. I do not want these students to spend so much time decoding the text, that they miss the core concepts of the book and the course. I understand the need for “a variety of alternative interventions” (iNACOL Standard I, 2011, p. 13). Therefore, I have included the entire novel’s audio text using audio files. This intervention will allow my students to listen to the novel read aloud at home (in addition to any reading we do in class) in order fully participate in the activities. This zone of proximal development “defines the space that a learner is ready to develop [their] useful knowledge” (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, page 20). I want my lower-level students to develop their knowledge at the same time as my higher-level students. When every student has access to the text, then every student can participate in the discussion both online and in class face-to-face.

Principle 10:

With so many Web 2.0 tools available for online instruction, it is very tempting to use everything. “Learning tools are a part of our environment and part of how our brains engage with the content” (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, page 34). However, not all learning tools are appropriate for all learning environments or all learners. In researching which learning tools I wanted to use, I kept the development of my students, and their access to technology in mind. I wanted the learning tools I used to actually make a difference in the presentation of our novel study’s learning objectives and the novel’s themes. So, I used tools “to create assignments, projects, and assessments that [were] aligned with students’ different visual, auditory, and hands-on ways of learning” (iNACOL Standard K, 2011, p. 16). Although simple in some respects, these tools will allow my students to engage in the content in new and exciting ways. Tools such as Voice Thread, Wall Wisher, video

streaming, and wikis allow my students to be collaborative and creative in how they demonstrate learning.

Best Practices for Teaching Online

Judith Boettcher (2010) outlines ten best practices for teaching online.

Ten Best Practices for Teaching Online	
Best Practice 1	Be present at the course site.
Best Practice 2	Create a supportive online course community.
Best Practice 3	Develop a set of explicit expectations for your learners and yourself as to how you will communicate and how much time students should be working on the course each week.
Best Practice 4	Use a variety of large group, small group, and individual work experiences.
Best Practice 5	Use synchronous and asynchronous activities.
Best Practice 6	Ask for informal feedback early in the term.
Best Practice 7	Prepare discussion posts that invite responses, questions, discussions, and reflections.
Best Practice 8	Search out and use content resources that are available in digital format if possible.
Best Practice 9	Combine core concept learning with customized and personalized learning.
Best Practice 10	Plan a good closing and wrap activity for the course.

Table 2: From *The Online Teaching Survival Guide* (p. 37), by J.V. Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Best Practice 1 and 3:

In order for my students to effectively learn the curriculum, I need to be present in the classroom. An effective online teacher “promotes student success through clear expectations, prompt responses, and regular feedback” (iNACOL Standard D, 2011, p. 7). In order for my students to effectively learn and understand the novel’s themes and learning goals, I need to be present online. Being present in a face-to-face class is very straightforward. School hours are from 8:30-3:30 PM. Online presence, however, requires some explanation and guidelines. I need to provide “clear expectations for teacher response time to student queries” (iNACOL Standard D, 2011, p. 8).

For my fifth graders, I have set certain “office hours” where I will be online posting assignments, reading and adding to discussion posts, and grading assignments. Being ten years old, my students want me to be online all the time. So, I set the boundary that I will be online directly after school (3:30-4:30 PM) and before my bed time (8:30-9:30 PM). I want my students to learn how to effectively manage their time as well as learn the course’s content. I also want them to understand

that “online learning is just as intensive as learning face-to-face, and time to do the work needs to be scheduled and planned for, just as if one were attending face-to-face classes” (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, page 41). Both are important skills for preparing my students for middle school and beyond.

Best Practice 2:

My classroom is a very social place. I pride myself in creating relationships with my students that allows them to take risks in their learning throughout the year. So, my challenge with creating an online course is how to successfully transfer the relationships we have built in class to an online environment. Boettcher & Conrad, 2010 outlines three types of dialogue: “faculty to learner, learner to learner, and learner to resource” (page 39). The focus on my online novel study is to have my students connect to our class’ content outside of the classroom. I want to use my online course to “[prepare] students for the global community they live in, both now and in the future (iNACOL Standard A, 2011, p. 4). In order to do this, I designed my online novel study around Boettcher & Conrad’s dialogues, weighing the last one a bit heavier. The learning activities will engage my students to our novel in different ways that what we do in our classroom.

Best Practice 5:

I “understand the importance of interaction in an online course and the role of varied communication tools in supporting interaction” (iNACOL Standard B, 2011, p. 5). Although most of my course’s activities are asynchronous (due to the hybrid nature of this course and the age of my students), the learning tools I have incorporated allow for some synchronous collaboration. For example, wikis “give students editorial control [that] can imbue in them a sense of responsibility and ownership...” (Richardson, 2010, page 61). Wikis such as Wall Wisher and Google Docs are a great way of introducing my fifth graders to the “wiki-world.” I do not want my students to be so overwhelmed with the learning tool that they cannot focus on the learning objective. I want the learning tool to enhance their understanding of the content.

Best Practice 6:

I often get informal feedback in my classroom. I want to “invite students to provide feedback on their perceptions of how they are learning in [this] course” (iNACOL Standard D, 2011, p. 8) I want them to have many opportunities to demonstrate their understanding. Formative assessments such as:

1. Thumbs-up:
 - a. I can quickly gauge where students are in their understanding my asking, “Show me how you feel you understand, can demonstrate, etc... [any particular topic/lesson].”
Thumbs up means that the student feels very comfortable with the content.
Thumbs to the side mean that the student feels he/she could use some more explanation/instruction. Thumbs down means that the student feels s they need more direct instruction.
 - b. This almost always leads to more probing questions from my thumbs down and/or thumbs-to-the-side students.
2. Exit tickets:
 - a. Before students can leave for Specials (Art, Gym, Music), or to Lunch, or just sometimes between subjects, I have students write on a note card. The content varies, but the purpose is to give me immediate feedback for either later in the afternoon, or more likely, the next day.

Since my course is a hybrid model, and the majority of our meeting time will be face-to-face, I did not include space for informal feedback early in my online novel study. That said I plan to continue the conversations held online in our classroom, including opportunities for getting feedback.

Best Practice 7:

When I teach reading, I focus on specific reading strategies while reading high-interest novels. Although I see some value in using basal reading textbooks, I want my students to improve their reading through discussion and reflection. Online, I have created “opportunities for self-reflection” in order to “guide student learning” (iNACOL Standard I, 2011, p. 13). I am excited to move this practice online because not only will it enhance our study of Bud, Not Buddy, but it will improve the writing skills of my students. Communication is more than just raising your hand in class and sharing. I want to model effective online communication and authorship of ideas.

Best Practice 8:

I spent a lot of time researching content from Bud, Not Buddy in digital form. I wanted to “create engaging and appropriate assessments in an online format” (iNACOL Standard K, 2011, p. 16). I know that my students would not have likely chosen Bud, Not Buddy to read independently.

Similarly, this means that “students will more likely use content, resources, and applications that are online, digital, and readily available” (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, page 44). Instead of just placing a foreign book in their hands and saying, *trust me, it is a good book*, I want my students to “enjoy seeing how what they are learning [in the novel] links to current events” (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, page 45). Current events to fifth graders are not what are being reported in the news. Current events in fifth grade range from playground conversations to parent arguments. Many of my video tutorials tap into this. I specifically chose videos that students could relate to, potentially see themselves creating in the future, and “to help transfer knowledge most effectively in the online environment” (iNACOL Standard K, 2011, p. 16).

Best Practice 9:

I try and differentiate in my classroom daily. Sometimes the content lends itself well in reaching all of my students. Sometimes not. Nevertheless, it is my responsibility to give all my students access to the core learning concepts and to try and personalize “the learning experience per student needs and performance” (iNACOL Standard I, 2011, p. 13) whenever (and wherever) possible. I want to “enhance the meaningfulness of the learning [online] and infuse [my] learners [with] enthusiasm in completing the assignments” (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, page 45).

Within each section of our online novel study, I have incorporated a range of activities that differentiate the learning for my students. From audio clips, to a varying complexity level of discussion questions, students will always have a choice in how they complete the assignment. Also, for those students who enjoy the more traditional format of face-to-face learning, I will always give them the option of turning in assignments in class, instead of online.

Tools and Technologies

The Web 2.0 learning tools I chose for my online novel study give my students creative ways to demonstrate their understanding of their own literacy. I want to introduce my students to collaborating and publishing tools will allow them to “flourish in the networked personal learning spaces that they will inhabit the rest of their lives” (Richardson, 2010, page 149).

Wikis:

My students are very familiar with Wikipedia as a searchable resource on the Internet. Luckily, they are part of a digital generation that trusts this power of the “collaborative construction of

knowledge and truth” (Richardson, 2010, page 57). However, there is a gap in the familiarity with other wikis as a form of collaborative authorship on the web. Therefore, I have included two different types of wikis for my online novel study.

1. Google Docs: I have created a few documents using Google Docs that allow my students to voice their opinions collaborative and asynchronously. I can then tabulate the data immediately for the next day’s class.
2. Prezi: I have used Prezi frequently in the classroom as an alternative to content-heavy slideshows. However, Prezi also has wiki capabilities, where multiple editors can create content in a shared space. I chose this tool for students when creating various charts and/or figures for the next day’s face-to-face meeting.
3. Zoomerang: This is a simple online poll/survey tool. I embedded a few throughout the course as an alternative to Google Docs.

Multimedia:

My students are very visual. Research supports the use of images, color, and multimedia in the presentation of content. Gangwer, 2009 reports that the brain processes visual information 60,000 times faster than plain text. Considering how much visual information we receive on a daily basis, it is not surprising that “visual aids in the classroom improve learning by up to 400 percent” (Gangwer, 2009).

For our online novel study, I have incorporated a variety of multimedia considering that it has become so easy to “create and consume multimedia as well as text and digital images” (Richardson, 2010, page 112). I use image-rich activities in learning sites such as Flickr.com, and I include video tutorials via YouTube.com whenever possible. I carefully chose each video or picture so as to enhance the course’s content trying to make what Boettcher & Conrad, 2010 calls “interconnected knowledge clusters.” I want my student to create meaning whenever possible, but meaning which is deep. Visual aids help this.

It is also important to me to include the audio text of Bud, Not Buddy for my students. This serves two purposes: (1) to seamlessly create a “ubiquitous presence of photo-video-audio” (Richardson, 2010, page 112); and (2) to give access of the novel to my students who are reading below the novel’s grade level. In podcast-like links, I create opportunities for my students to

participate in the novel's activities despite their decoding abilities. I want 100% participation both online and in the classroom, and I feel that audio allows this.

Learner Assessment

I feel that assessment, no matter the design, needs to be authentic, both to the learner and the educator. Students should not fear assessments because they should be presented as opportunities to share knowledge, and or progress toward a learning goal, with the teacher. Teachers should not fear assessments because they should be received as such. Nothing punitive. Nothing final. Just a snapshot of where each learner is on the continuum of growth. Therefore, I created assessment activities which reflect this philosophy.

Throughout our online study of Bud, Not Buddy, I have various formative assessments designed to give me this snapshot. For example, each lesson's activities include questions for comprehension and discussion and vocabulary assessments. Traditionally, comprehension questions were designed to give at the end of a chapter to assess a student's decoding and interpreting skills. Whereas I can still use these assessments as such, I have instead decided to use the answers to these questions to guide our collective understanding of the novel's themes and characters. I include the comprehension questions alongside discussion questions so that students do not see them as final, graded assignments. Students will be allowed to turn in these questions in class, or online, but either way, each student is responsible for coming to class prepared to discuss the novel's core concepts and themes. I have also included a variety of online surveys and wikis for students to assess their own learning of the content using Google Docs, Prezi and Zoomerang.

Vocabulary development plays an important role in reading. Throughout Bud, Not Buddy, I have certain vocabulary exercises for the students such as matching, crosswords, fill-in-the-blank questions, and synonym and antonym activities. When possible, I incorporated a learning tool for these activities.

Probably the most important assessment activities I have throughout our online novel study are the reflective exercises. The themes in Bud, Not Buddy lend themselves well to reflections. There are issues of racism and prejudice, internal and external conflict, family, independence and interdependence, and poverty. Since students will be reflecting on these issues as we read the novel, it is easier to then ask students to reflect about themselves as online learners. Boettcher's (2010) learning experience framework has four elements: the learner, the teacher, the content, and the context or

environment. Each of these areas offers a place to be reflective, both for the student and the teacher. For example, we can ask questions such as (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, pages 256-57):

1. What did you [the teacher] learn about your students?
 - a. What did you [the student] learn about yourself as a learner?
2. How clear were the learning objectives for this course?
 - a. How well did you [the student] understand the learning objectives?
 - b. Were the learning objectives meaningful?
 - c. Were the content resources effective at helping the students achieve the course learning outcomes?
3. How strong was the learning community?
4. What was it like teaching (and learning) online? Any technical issues?
5. Where did students do their best work at learning: individually, in small teams, or in larger groups?

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