Defining Success

Strategies for Assessing Collaborative Group Projects

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Today’s Objectives

- Promote student success in group projects
- Consider how learning-centered practices include group learning
- Identify strategies to focus successfully on collaboration
- Consider strategies to assess contribution of groups and individuals to a collaborative project
Why are you sold on using group projects?

1. What do you tell your students?

2. What are the advantages for instructors?
Messages to students

- This *will* be a good experience
- You’ll learn to work as a team
- You don’t want to do this complicated project solo
- You’ll have a chance to assess others’ contributions
- The workplace seeks those who know how to work well on teams
Advantages from the faculty perspective

- Opportunity for students to use and apply course content
- Students gaining skills to use in upper level courses
- Students learning to manage nuances of interpersonal work
- Getting to know my students more individually
- Increased efficiency: Fewer projects to grade means more time for more thorough feedback
Research confirms
Why learning-centered?
Why collaborative learning?

- Learner-Centered Teaching (Weimer, 2002)
- Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987)
- Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as a lever (Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996)
- How College Affects Students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; 2005)
- National Survey of Student Engagement (Kuh, 1998 - present)
Learning-centered teaching focuses on:

- what students are learning
  and
- how they are learning
What supports are available to you?
Build a Framework

1. Course and project objectives
2. Instruction in effective group work
3. Teaching students to monitor group meetings
4. Guiding students to self assess contributions to a group
5. Guiding students to assess group members’ contributions
6. Consider grading options
Avoiding Conflict

Instructor’s Role

1. Set clear goals
2. Make expectations for team members explicit
3. Assign roles (e.g. devil’s advocate, visionary, leader)
4. Manage group size and makeup
5. Stay close, check-in often

Students’ Role

1. Establish meeting times
2. Encourage frequent interaction
3. Rotate roles @ each mtg.
4. Decide by consensus how to resolve conflicts:
   • Lack of participation
   • Poor contributions
   • Take turns talking
   • Be open to persuasion
Integrate a focus on *how*

- Make a plan.
- Be systematic.
- Plan small increments.
  - Increase time on task
  - Add interpersonal skills
  - Teach project management skills
- **Be prepared to assess and fine-tune.**
- Expect to be successful.
- Keep trying.

cf. Weimer’s (2002) chapter 9: Making learner-centered teaching work
1. Objectives for course and projects

- Integrate your existing course/project objectives into the assignment

- Consider building process objectives into your course:
  - Demonstrate effective leadership skills
  - Learn to be a productive team member
  - Practice offering feedback to peers
  - Learn objective ways to assess a peer
2. Instruction in how groups take responsibility

- Develop own ground rules - Example
  - Everyone prepares, participates, attends
  - One person talks at a time (no side conversations)
  - Everyone takes a turn at each role
    - Leader, time keeper, note taker, energizer, evaluator
  - Agree upon when/why a member is asked to leave group

- Assess use of roles and skills at each meeting

- Request project/group updates at mid-point

- Evaluate group members when project submitted
3. Monitor group meeting

F2F
- In-class monitoring
- Collect group slip

Online
- Group discussion board
- Wiki
- Voicethread
Collaborative Groups: Roles and Skills

Task/goals____________________Meeting time/date______

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Team member’s name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recorder/note taker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeptic and timekeeper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Team members’ names/Team Process Skills**

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prompt and present</td>
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<tr>
<td>participated/presented ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>eye contact and listening skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>used nonjudgmental language</td>
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<tr>
<td>checked for common understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>worked to consensus</td>
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<tr>
<td>used role responsibilities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments on process at this meeting:

Members’ signatures acknowledge meeting goals and outcomes.
4. Learn to Self-Assess

**F2F**
- Paper Form
- Online Form
- (or same as online examples)

**Online**
- Private journal
- Individual Wiki
- Assignment tool
- Online Form
Form for a Self-Evaluation

Your Name: ___________________________________________________________

Instructions: Evaluate your work in the group using the criteria below. Rate each criterion from 1 to 3, with 3 being the highest. The highest possible score is 15. Be fair and honest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended group meetings regularly and promptly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributed to the overall group project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted a fair share of responsibility for the project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed assigned tasks on time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted responsibility for and observed ground rules.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percentage of the work did you complete? ______%</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your most significant contribution to the project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other comments to justify your ratings:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Learn to assess group members’ contributions

Ask yourself:
- Should this assessment be anonymous?
- Should I award points for this?
Form for Evaluating Members’ Group Participation

*Instructions:* Evaluate each person in the group using the criteria below. Insert each person’s name and rate him/her from 1 to 3 on each criterion. 1 is low. 3 is high. The highest possible score is 15. Be fair and honest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Name 1</th>
<th>Name 2</th>
<th>Name 3</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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</table>

**Total** your rating for each person:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What percentage of the work did this person complete?</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Describe each person's most significant contribution to the project.
Name 1:
Name 2:
Name 3:

Other Comments:
6. Grading group projects

- Each group member submits self-evaluation and evaluation of those in group

AND

- Your choice of these options:
  - Shared Student Grade
  - Group Average Grade
  - Individual Grade Allocated Task
  - Individual Grade Individual Report
Example 1:
Online International Marketing

- Undergraduate course with 120 students
- Before the redesign:
  - Instructor doing too much of the work
  - All assessments were exams
  - Class met in virtual meeting room; no asynchronous activities
- Prompts for redesign:
  - Students requesting more asynchronous activities
  - Desire to improve DFW rates
  - Wanted students to process more
Solution: Asynchronous Activities for Groups

- 5 Case studies
- 3 Current Issue Research Papers

Logistics:
- Groups of 4-5
- Adaptive Release used to control access
- Training in virtual session and embedded in the assignment
- Strict Interim deadlines
- Tools: Wikis, Voicethread
Solution: Asynchronous Activities for Groups

Monitoring Student Participation

- Wiki Revision History
- Voicethread daily digests
- Participation tracking spreadsheet

Assessment

- Shared group grade with deductions for students who didn’t participate
Example 2: Probation and Parole

- Undergraduate course with 50 students
- Prompts for redesign:
  - Desire to improve engagement; students complained about discussion boards
  - Desire to improve writing skills
  - Instructor spent too much time editing drafts and grading papers; didn’t have time for discussions
Solution: Critical Friends and Group Work

- Case Studies
- Video discussions
- Response papers

Logistics:

- Groups of 2, then 4 (start small then grow)
- Preparing students to be “critical friends”
- Tools: Group tools, Voicethread, Wikis, Assignment Tool
- Strict interim deadlines
6. Considering Options for Grading group projects

- Each group member submits self-evaluation and evaluation of those in group

AND

- Your choice of these options:
  - Shared Student Grade
  - Group Average Grade
  - Individual Grade Allocated Task
  - Individual Grade Individual Report
Shared Student Grade

What is submitted:
One product per group

How to grade:
All group members receive the same grade, regardless of individual contribution.

Advantages
- Relatively straightforward
- Encourages collaboration
  Sink or swim together
- Decreases Plagiarism

Disadvantages
- Individual contributions are not necessarily reflected in the marks
- Stronger students may be unfairly disadvantaged by weaker ones and vice versa
Group Average Grade

Each student’s individual submissions (allocated tasks or individual reports) are scored individually.

The group members each receive the average of these individual scores.

Advantages

- Encourages collaboration Sink or swim together
- may provide motivation for students to focus on both individual and group work and thereby develop in both areas

Disadvantages

- may be perceived as unfair by students
- stronger students may be unfairly disadvantaged by weaker ones and vice versa
Individual Grade – Allocated Task

Each student completes an allocated task that contributes to the final group product and gets the marks for that task only.

Advantages

- potential to reward outstanding performance
- a relatively objective way to ensure participation
- may provide additional motivation to students

Disadvantages

- dependencies between tasks may slow progress of some
- difficult to find tasks that are exactly equal in size/complexity
- does not encourage the group process/collaboration
Individual Grade – Individual Report

Each student writes and submits an individual report based on the group's work on the task/project.

**Advantages**
- Ensures individual effort
- Perceived as fair by students

**Disadvantages**
- Likelihood of unintentional plagiarism increased
- Doesn’t encourage group process/collaboration
Student distribution of grade

Instructor awards a set number of scores and let the group decide how to distribute them.

**Advantages**

- Reward outstanding performance
- Negotiation skills become part of the learning process
- Motivates students to contribute more
- Easy to implement

**Disadvantages**

- Students may not have the skills necessary for the required negotiation
- May foster competition and therefore be counterproductive to teamwork
- May lead to conflict
- Open to subjective evaluation by friends
In summary

- “If you think you understand something ... apply it ... teach it to a peer”
- Learn group skills as learn course content
- Include as course & project objectives
- Emphasize learning for learning (not credits)
- Explain relevance of learning collaborative behaviors for profession
- Role of teamwork in program and profession
- Alert colleagues, chair to innovation pilots
References


National Survey of Student Engagement: http://nsse.iub.edu/index.cfm


Thank you

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- Mrs. Vining's comments at 4:09pm, 3/10 (Video)
- Michael at 10:42pm, 3/10 (Text)

SP13-3780-S3G7-Case: Starnes Brenner
- Yifeng Zou at 12:49am, 3/11 (Video)
- Mrs. Vining's comments at 4:17pm, 3/10 (Video)
- chuan zhou at 9:47pm, 3/10 (Video)

SP13-3780-S3G6-Case: Starnes Brenner
- Mrs. Vining's comments at 4:23pm, 3/10 (Video)

SP13-3780-S3G5-Case: Starnes Brenner
- Samuel Mogelnicki at 2:46pm, 3/10 (Video)
- Samuel Mogelnicki at 2:56pm, 3/10 (Video)
- Samuel Mogelnicki at 3:08pm, 3/10 (Video)
- Mrs. Vining's comments at 4:29pm, 3/10 (Video)

SP13-3780-S3G4-Case: Starnes Brenner
- Mrs. Vining's comments at 4:35pm, 3/10 (Video)

SP13-3780-S3G2-Case: Starnes Brenner
- Mrs. Vining's comments at 12:59pm, 3/10 (Video)