Strategies to Make Group Work Actually Work

Presented by Karen Premer & Olimpia Leite-Trambly

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EVERY GROUP PROJECT

DOES 99% OF THE WORK

HAS NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON THE WHOLE TIME

SAYS HE'S GOING TO HELP BUT HE'S NOT

DISAPPEAR AT THE VERY BEGINNING AND DOESN'T SHOW UP AGAIN TIL THE VERY END

IN SCHOOL YOU HAVE EVER DONE
Group projects made me understand why Batman worked alone.
Group Work Challenges

- Work (all or parts) not being completed on time
- Difficult to get started
- Lack of leadership
- Lack of group rules
- Lack of direction
- Inability to focus
- Ideas are not thoroughly discussed
- Members not contributing
- Ineffective communication
- Conflict between team members
- Overbearing personalities
Group Work Benefits

- Authentic situations
- Students learn from others' experiences and skills
- Build teamwork and problem solving skills
- Eliminate anonymity
- Participation from reluctant students
- Additional form of assessment
More Group Work Benefits

- Increase and encourage
  - Communication
  - Cooperation
  - Collaboration
  - Critical thinking
  - Perseverance
  - Adaptability
  - Interpersonal skills
  - Accountability
Best Practices to Design Groups

- Not a ‘one and done’ project
How to Create Groups
How to Create Groups in Canvas

- Automatically create groups
- Self sign-up groups
- Manually create groups
  - age
  - major
  - interest
  - other?
Dealing with Students Who Hate Working in Groups
Did You Hate Group Work?

Think about your experience working with groups. Please select one response that best suits your experience.

A. I enjoy working with groups because my group members usually help me understand the material and tasks and therefore I can perform better.

B. I question the value of group work for me, because I usually end up doing more than the fair share of my work.

C. I have little or no experience working with groups.

D. I have different experience than the choices given above. Please describe.
Group Member Roles

- Facilitator
- Recorder
- Reporter
- Timekeeper
- Devil’s Advocate
- Harmonizer
- Prioritizer
- Explorer
- Innovator
- Checker
- Runner
- Wildcard

Samples
Group Communication
**Methods of Group Communication**

Campus provided

- Canvas group options*
- Zoom
- VoiceThread
- Box
- Qualtrics

* Instructor by default is included

Student / Free resources

- Text Messages
- Google docs, hangout, calendar
- Skype
- Trello
- Survey Monkey
Using Groups in Canvas

2018FITEC29003 > Animal

Recent Activity in Animal

No Recent Messages  You don't have any messages to show in your stream yet. Once you begin participating in your courses you'll see this stream fill up with messages from discussions, grading updates, private messages between you and other users, etc.
Using Groups in Canvas Tutorials

- For further information on how to do this, see these guides from Instructure:
  - What are student groups?
  - How do I view student groups?
  - Where do I find the Group sets that I already created?
  - How do I create a new group set?
  - How do I automatically create groups in a group set?
  - How do I manually create groups in a group set?
  - How do I create self sign-up groups?
  - How do I automatically assign students to groups?
  - How do I manually assign students to groups?
- Additional information on groups can be found in the "Groups Chapter" of Instructure's guides.
Best Practices for Group Projects

- Contract
- Skills Inventory
- Step-by-step instructions
- Monitor groups & multiple benchmark points
- Strategies to hold group members accountable
- Instructor assessment
Team Contract

Created by team members to:

- Identify and communicate expectations by team members
- Increase sense of community
- Individual accountability

Includes:

- Goals
- Expectations
- Policies and procedures
- Consequences
- Group members names, signatures, and contact information

Samples
Skills Inventory/Resume

- Why use a skills inventory in group work?
  - Better utilize the strength of team
  - Focus on skills specific to group project
  - Identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities

Samples
### Step-by-Step Instructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Student Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Specific</td>
<td>- Decide on final outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Complete</td>
<td>- Breakdown into pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Time for questions</td>
<td>- Make a checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Clear, helpful feedback</td>
<td>- Ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Respect and trust</td>
<td>- Respect and trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Monitor Groups & Provide Benchmarks

Schedule periodic points for:
- Progress
- Group dynamics
- Feedback

What can be done?
- Submit a step/piece of product
- Virtual meeting between group members and instructor
- Schedule to allow for self-correction by group
Strategies to Hold Students Accountable

- Assess student process
- Assess student product
- Can be qualitative or quantitative
- Timing: middle or end of project
- Should it be anonymous?

- Student viewpoint about process and product:
  - Self-assessment
  - Peer assessment
  - Group assessment

NOTE: students may not always be straightforward when evaluating another or themselves.
Self-Assessment

- Each team member documents and evaluates their own contributions to the team. Throughout the whole process.
Peer Assessment

- Each team member evaluates the contributions of their teammates. Throughout the whole process.
Group Assessment

- Each member of the team evaluates the dynamics of the team as a whole.
Instructor Assessment

How will you assess your student group?

- End product where everyone is equally graded
- End product + individual component
  - Short essay, journal, test, other
  - 50/50, 80%/20%, other
- Individual components
  - Process
  - End product
  - Student’s portion/presentation
  - Student evaluations
  - Benchmarks
Outside Assessment

Who else could assess the groups?

- Professors
- Community members
- Students
- Competitions

How do you score those assessments?
Grading Assessments

- No matter how you grade the group work ALWAYS tell the students what the expectations are for the project.
- Analytical Rubric provides most detail with least amount of ‘opinion-base’ assessment.
- Holistic Rubric will show what is expected in the form of a checklist or to do list.
- Always, ALways, ALWAYS provide specific feedback to the student group and/or individual group member.
Group Projects and Assignments

- Leaders with incentives
- Group work that inspires cooperation and competition
- Apply group work on discussion
  - Small group discussions
  - Summary is a final post to share with the class
- Pairing vs. small groups
- Group quizzes
WHAT DO STUDENTS LEARN WHEN THEY ENGAGE IN COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS?

SKETCH-NOTE BY JOHN SPENCER

SYSTEMS THINKING
CRITICAL THINKING
COMMUNICATION
ADAPTABILITY AND ITERATIVE THINKING
EMPOWERMENT
INQUIRY
MAKER MINDSET
PERSEVERANCE
EMPATHY
PASSION FOR LEARNING
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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