GROUP WORK ASSESSMENT

► When should I use group work as an assessment?

► How can I design a fair and reliable group work assessment?

► How do I mark group work assessment effectively and efficiently?

► What support do my students need to do assessable group work? ?

This resource discusses when to use group work as assessment and outlines some tips to design and evaluate group work assessment. It also provides some useful resources related to the advantages and disadvantages of different grading methods.

Why use group work assessment?

Group work is often used to assess individual teamwork skills and interaction and/or individual work in a group project. Groupwork is best suited to projects that require collaboration. Group work can help students construct knowledge collectively while developing skills in collaboration, communication and teamwork (Chang & Kang, 2016).

Common challenges include free riding, group processes, group size, and selecting types of task (Piezon, 2008). Therefore, incorporating group assessments into units requires thoughtful decisions on group work design, facilitation, and evaluation.

Assessing group work

The same basic principles of assessment design apply to both group and individual work (Chang & Kang, 2016). However, some additional aspects of group work assessment need to be considered:

► What to assess: Decide whether to assess process (individual teamwork skills and interaction) or product (quantity and quality of individual work in a group project), or both product and process. This decision depends on the aims and purposes of the assessment.

► How to evaluate/grade or grading methods:

• Decide whether the group work assessment will be marked by an instructor or by group members. The types and advantages and disadvantages of each grading method can be found here: https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/assesslearning/groupWorkGradingMethods.html or https://teaching.cornell.edu/resource/group-work-how-evaluate-it

• Group performance must be translated into fair and equitable grades. It is important to clarify criteria before the task and explain how individuals are graded in the group (Chang & Kang, 2016).

• To increase fairness and motivate students, multiple methods of evaluation may be used: instructor evaluations, self and peer evaluations (Thompson & Ku, 2010).

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► Group formation (including determining group size and how to form groups) is crucial because it affects group performance, student satisfaction and learning. Here are some quick tips:

- Groups should not exceed six members to maximise interactions and learning (Bridges and Hallinger, 1995).

- Give students control over the process, content and outcomes of their group work, which motivates them in learning (Brindley, Walti & Blaschke, 2009).

► Instructor support

- Provide clear learning objectives, task requirements, timelines with explicit expectations (marking rubrics and grading methods) in the unit learning guide and vUWS.

- Explicitly teach students how to work in groups (for example, https://www.online.drexel.edu/news/group-tips.aspx) and, if relevant, how to use marking rubric to self-assess or peer-assess.

- Monitor each group's work with prompt support and feedback. This keeps the group on task, addresses issues as they arise, and encourages students to build good relationships (Brindley et al. , 2009; Coll, Rochera, de Gispert, & Díaz-Barriga, 2013).

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An example of a group work marking rubric

Criteria	Standards				
	High distinction	**Distinction**	**Credit**	**Satisfactory**	**Unsatisfactory**
Sharing the workload	Does a full share of the work – or more, knows what needs to be done and does it, volunteers to help others.	Does an equal share of the work, volunteers to help others.	Does own share of work; helps others when asked.	Does what is assigned to, but no more than that.	Does not complete what is assigned to, does not catch up after absence nor seeks help.
Meeting deadlines	Consistently completes assigned work ahead of time.	Always completes assigned work on time.	Mostly completed assigned work on time.	Needs some reminding, work can be late sometimes but it doesn't impact other's work or the group progress.	Needs frequent reminding; work is always late and impedes quality of work or the group progress.
Getting organised	Takes the initiative proposing meeting times, getting group organised, and keeping thorough records of all meetings and documents.	Organises meetings and prepares all relevant documents before and after the meetings.	Works agreeably with partner(s) concerning times and places to meet. Prepares all documents as requested.	Could be coaxed into meeting with other partner(s). Prepares most documents as requested.	Does not meet partner(s) at agreed times and places or prepare required documents before or after the meetings.
Showing up for meetings	Consistently punctual for all meetings.	Generally punctual, always let the group know when late.	Shows up for meetings mostly on time.	Can show up late or leave early, but it isn't a big problem for completing work.	No show or extremely late, feeble or no excuse offered.
Participating in discussions	Consistently provides many good ideas to advance all the discussions, inspires others and clearly communicates desires, ideas, personal needs, and feelings.	Provides some good ideas to advance the discussions, engages others in discussions, and communicates desires, ideas, personal needs, and feelings.	Participates actively in most discussions, respects others, and shares feelings and thoughts.	Listens mainly on some occasions, makes some suggestions.	Seems bored with conversations; rarely speaks up, and ideas are mostly off the mark.
Providing feedback	Consistently provides dignified, clear, relevant and respectful feedback.	Gives constructive feedback in a collegial manner.	Feedback is generally constructive.	Provides some feedback; but feedback can sometimes hurt feelings of others or be irrelevant.	Is openly rude when giving feedback.
Receiving feedback	Graciously accepts feedback and uses it effectively.	Accepts feedback and makes effort to use it to improve work.	Accepts feedback but with limited use of the feedback to improve work.	Reluctantly accepts to listen to feedback.	Refuses to take up feedback.

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Peer assessment of other members' contribution to group work

For each member of your group, award a mark out of 5 for their level of performance as you saw it in each of the following aspects:

Attitude:

Did they have a positive approach to working in your group? Were they willing to contribute and give it a go at assigned tasks? Were they collaborative with other members and did they treat them with respect?

Participation:

How involved were they with the group? Did they attend all the meetings and if they had to miss a meeting due to a decent reason, did they let the group know and make effort to catch up or contribute in other ways, such as through emails? Did they respond to group's emails or requests in a timely manner?

Research:

Did they contribute, collect, gather and share research?

Leadership:

Did they help with your group organisation, decisions or make relevant suggestions?

Writing-up:

Did they contribute to writing up the assignment? Did they provide useful comments/feedback on the sections that other members write? Did they provide editing work and/or making sure the assignment read as a whole?

Use the following rubric and enter a mark out of 5 for each member for his/her level of performance.
1. didn't contribute in any way to this aspect

2. willing, but not much use

3. average compared to other team members

4. above average, a useful person to have in my group

5. outstanding in this aspect

Group member	Performance					Reasons for the ratings
	Attitude	**Participation**	**Research**	**Leadership**	**Writing-up**	
1, Name:						
2, Name:						
...						

Technical considerations

► Group tools are available on vUWS: Group Blog, Group Discussion Board, Email, File Exchange, Group Journal, Group Tasks, and Group Wiki
View the Group Tools Handout resource

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References

Bridges, E. M., & Hallinger, P. (1995). *Implementing problem-based learning in leadership development*. Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED400583)

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Thompson, L., & Ku, H. (2010). Degree of online collaboration and team performance: A case study. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education, 11,* 127. Retrieved from http://www.infoagepub.com/quarterly-review-of-distance-education.html

Useful links

Assessing by Group Work - UNSW
Grading Methods for Group Work - Carnegie Mellon University
Group Work: How to Evaluate It - Cornell University
Assessing group work - UTS