

Assessing Student Learning: Group Projects

Group projects: Students work together over an extended period of time in structured groups to complete a graded multifaceted project.

Challenges:

- What is the balance between group output and individual student performance?
- What is the balance between product and process?
- How do I address [real](#) or [perceived](#) free rider problem?

Solutions:

- Use [positive interdependence](#) and [individual accountability](#) as the frameworks for assessment.
- Plan assessment
 - Use student [learning outcomes](#) as the starting point.
 - Explain the [purpose of the group assignment](#).
 - Make [assessment criteria](#) clear.

Assess Positive Interdependence: Process

- Discuss the [criteria](#) for assessing group process beforehand.
- Have each student keep a log of [group process assessments](#).
- Collect process assessment at the end of each stage of the project.
- Make peer assessments confidential.
- Have students complete [culminating group process evaluation](#).
- Factor group process evaluations into the determination of individual grade.

Assess Individual Accountability: Product

- Determine [grading methods and weightings](#) for product and individual grade.
- Use [self and peer-evaluation](#) to achieve individual accountability.
- Have students keep a log of [self-included](#) and [self-excluded](#) peer-evaluations.
- Collect self and peer-evaluations at the end of each stage.
- Have students complete a [culminating peer-evaluation](#) at project end.
- Make adjustments for ratings that appear unfair.
- [Grading mechanism](#) should comprise of:
 - Product grade (i.e. base grade or group grade).
 - Individual grade: Adjusted up or down based on self and peer-evaluation scores).

EVIDENCE

- Anson and Goodman (2014) found that interim formative peer assessments coupled with timely feedback fostered positive group processes.
- Sprague et al. (2019) supported the effectiveness of peer and self-evaluations to fairly assess students' contributions to group work.

References

Anson, R., & Goodman, A. J. (2014). A peer assessment system to improve student team experiences. *Journal of Education for Business*, 89, 27-34.

Sprague, M., Wilson, K. F., & McKenzie, K. S. (2019). Evaluating the quality of peer and self evaluations as measures of student contributions to group projects. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 38(5), 1061-1074.

ADVICE

Please consider the following recommendations:

- Keep peer-evaluations confidential.
- Use a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions.
- Encourage students to include comments.



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