



Inspiring practices in group work

November 12th 2018

**A TRADITION OF
INDEPENDENT
THINKING**



UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Pair/Share Activity: Introductions & Expectations



1: Write on post-it
*"What I'd hope to
get out of this
session is..."*

2: Tell the person
next to you your
name and something
interesting about it

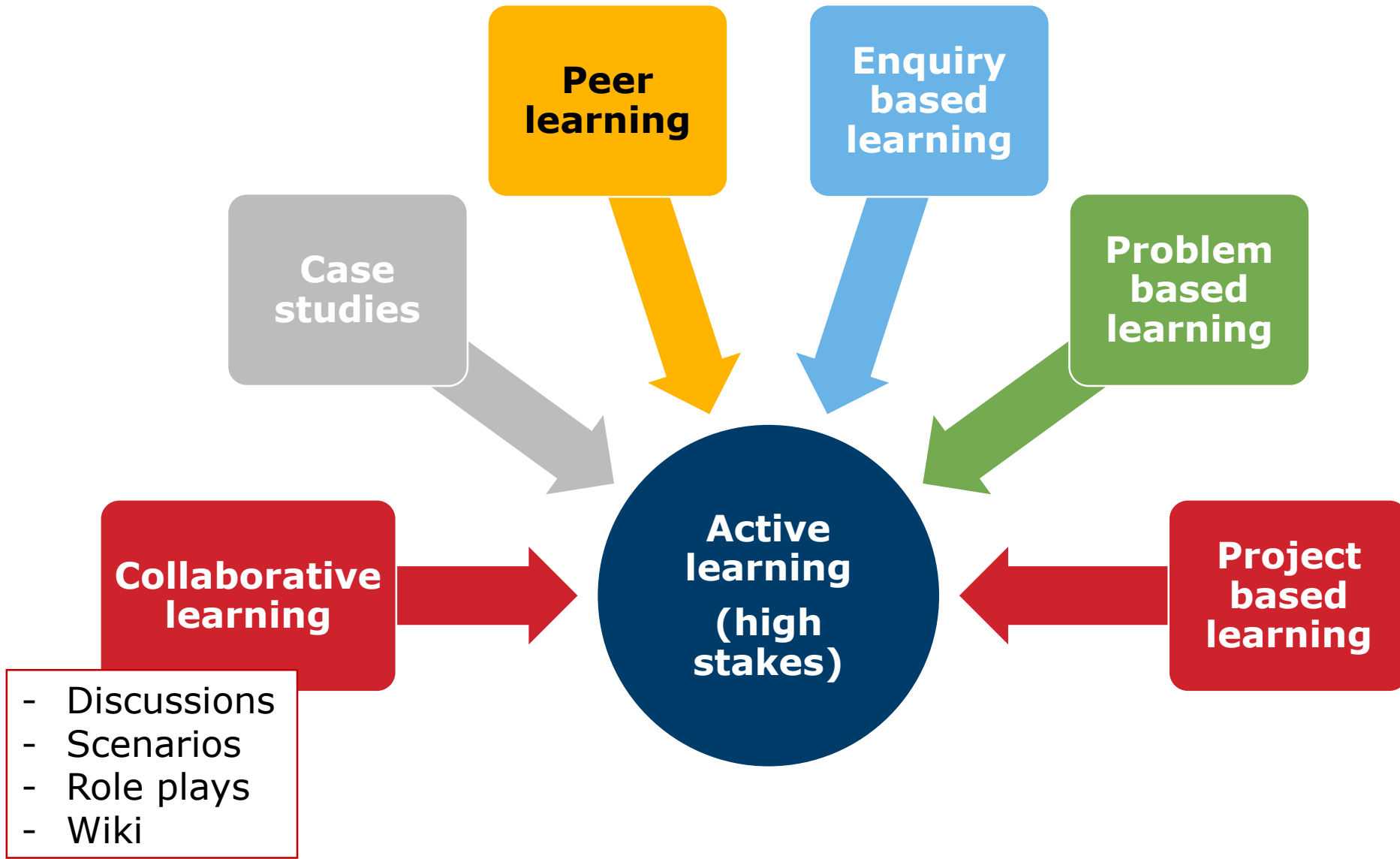
UCC Group work champions

Griffin Murray	Centre Manager, Adult Continuing Education
Norma Browne	Co-ordinator of Disability Studies, ACE
Kenneth Burns	School of Applied Social Studies
Seán Ó Conaill	School of Law
Olive McCarthy	Department of Accounting and Finance
Daniel Blackshields	Department of Economics
Michael Murphy	Department of Management & Marketing
Joe Bogue	Department of Food Business & Development
Anne Holohan	Dental School
Ciara O'Toole	Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences
Yvonne Pennisi	Department of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy
JJ Keating	School of Pharmacy
Aine Horgan	School of Nursing and Midwifery
Niall O'Leary	School of Microbiology
Carmel Shortiss	School of Microbiology

Definition

...“group work” involves students working collaboratively on a particular project, assignment or task and where the assessment is based on the output of the groupwork and / or the group work process (i.e. assessment of participation in the group).

*UCC Policy on Designing, Delivering
& Assessing Group Work, April 2017*



Why bother with group work?

- 1: Peer learning can improve the overall quality of student learning
 - Students learn from each other and benefit from activities that require them to apply their knowledge in a new context

- 2: Group work can help develop generic skills
 - Teamwork skills
 - Analytic and cognitive skills
 - Collaborative skills
 - Organisational and time management

- 3: Group work may reduce the workload in assessing, grading and providing feedback to students ???

3 key stages in group work

Group formation

- Group selection and composition
- Group size

Group management

- Preparation
- Management of emerging issues
- Effective disciplinary procedures

Assessment

- Assess product, process or both
- Assess group, individual or combination of both

Group work elements

Groups thrive most when their task is **challenging** and closely **related to** the course content, course objectives, and **students' experiences and interests**.

Like all assignments, need to clearly articulate objectives, define the task, clarify expectations, model high quality work and communicate performance criteria.

Specific to group work

- 1: Foster interdependence
- 2: Develop group work skills
- 3: Individual accountability

Foster interdependence

Strategy

Ensure projects are sufficiently complex that students must draw on one another's knowledge and skills.

Create shared goals that can only be met through collaboration.

Limit resources to compel students to share critical information and materials.

Assign roles within the group that will help facilitate collaboration.

Foster interdependence: ***What Learning Outcomes are being assessed?***

They may be specific to group work

- Understanding of participative roles and responsibilities
- Leadership and organisational skills
- Working in a multidisciplinary or multi-cultural environment
- Conflict management

And generic in project work

- The ability to conduct research
- Report writing skills
- Presentation skills
- Project management (time and asset management)
- Problem solving

Foster interdependence:

Group Work roles

The roles assigned will differ based on size of team and these can be fixed or rotating. Some possible roles include:

Facilitator: moderates discussions, distributes work

Recorder: takes notes, summarizes decisions, keeps records

Reporter: serves as group spokesperson

Timekeeper: highlights deadlines, keeps meetings on schedule

Devil's advocate: raises counter-arguments, different explanations

Explorer: uncover new potential in people, explores new areas

Develop group work skills

Students need to learn how to work with others to do things they might only know how to do individually, for example:

- assess the nature and difficulty of a task
- break the task down into steps or stages
- plan a strategy
- manage time

Students need to know how to handle issues that only arise in groups, for example, to:

- explain their ideas to others
- listen to alternative ideas and perspectives
- reach consensus
- delegate responsibilities
- coordinate efforts
- resolve conflicts
- integrate the contributions of multiple team members

Develop group work skills

Strategy

Emphasize the practical importance of strong teamwork skills.

Address negative or inaccurate preconceptions about group work.

Provide structure and guidance to help students plan.

Set interim deadlines.

Establish ground rules.

Teach and reinforce conflict-resolution skills.

Alert students to common pitfalls.

Foster metacognitive skills (e.g. through self-assessments)

Incorporate process assessments.

Group Exercise



Activity (in groups of 4)

1: *Individually*: Review the worksheet on group work skills.

2: *In groups*: Select one strategy from the 9 identified and discuss how you could incorporate in your context.

3: Rank the strategies on group work skills development from important to unimportant then post your group's top ranked strategy on Socrative. (go to <https://b.socrative.com/login/student>)

7 minutes

Individual accountability

Strategy

Include individual quizzes, weekly journal entries etc in addition to evaluating the work of the group as a whole.

Assess both the group product and the individual submission.

Group Exercise



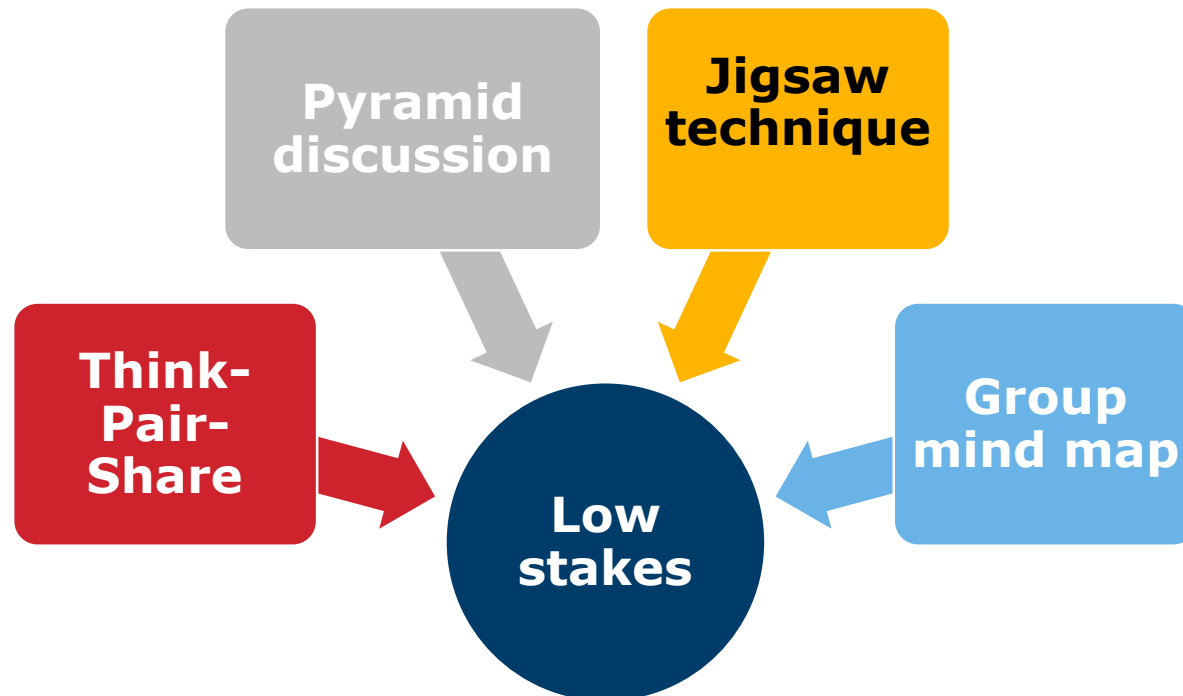
Activity (in groups of 4)

- 1: *Individually*: Review the worksheet on small groups tasks.
- 2: *In groups*: Select one category from the 4 identified and discuss how you could incorporate some of the ideas in your teaching.
- 3: Report back to wider group on the category you discussed and consensus on usefulness/applicability of potential small group task.

10 minutes

Small group tasks

- Get students involved early
- Make course topics come alive
- Deepen thinking about a topic
- Strengthen skills



Group Exercise



Activity (in groups of 4)

1: *Individually*: Review the worksheet on types of small groups.

2: *In groups*: Select one group type from the 8 identified and discuss how the group type relates to your proposed group task.

3: Design an activity relating to your context using the identified group type.

10 minutes

Types of small groups

Buzz groups

Think-pair-share

Circle of voices

Rotating trips

Snowball groups/pyramids

Jigsaw

Fishbowl

Learning teams



Background to group work policy

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- × Unfair marks
- × Free riders
- × Differing standards among group members
- × Parity of opportunity

- ✓ Promotes higher order learning
- ✓ Authentic form of assessment
- ✓ Develop key graduate attributes
- ✓ Central to certain pedagogies



General principles on group work

1: Clear module objectives and learning outcomes communicated effectively to students

2: Clear statement of assessment method(s) communicated effectively to students

3: Clarity around how groups are formed

How will the input of the group members be assessed?

General principles on group work

4: Timely and informative feedback for students

5: Opportunities for students to comment on experience in the group

6: Processes to address any issues/conflicts arising during a group work process



General principles on group work

7: Feedback mechanism on student experience of module

8: Support and collaboration among staff involved in group work activities

9: Due attention to relevant policies, codes of conduct etc.



Assessing group work

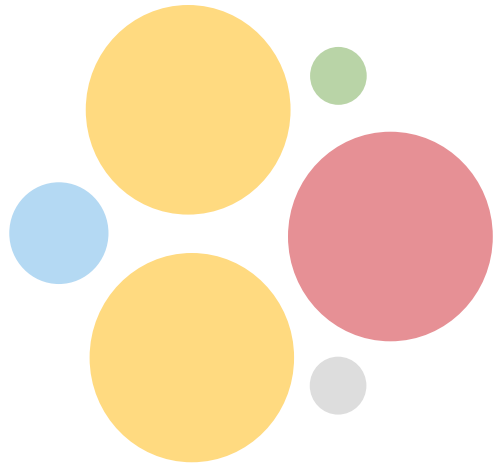
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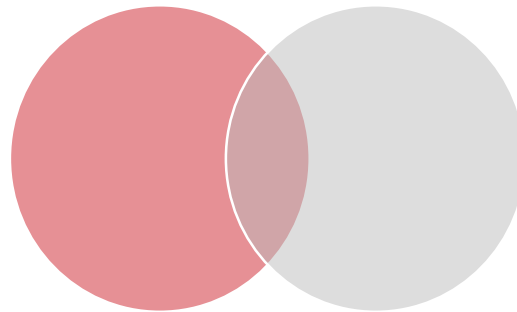
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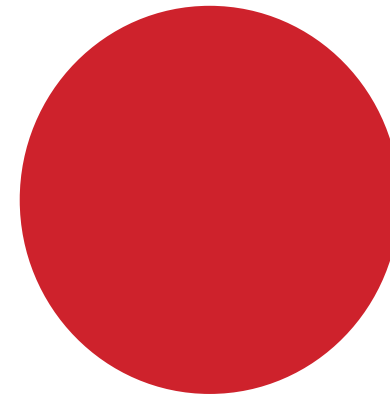
Assessment strategies



Person

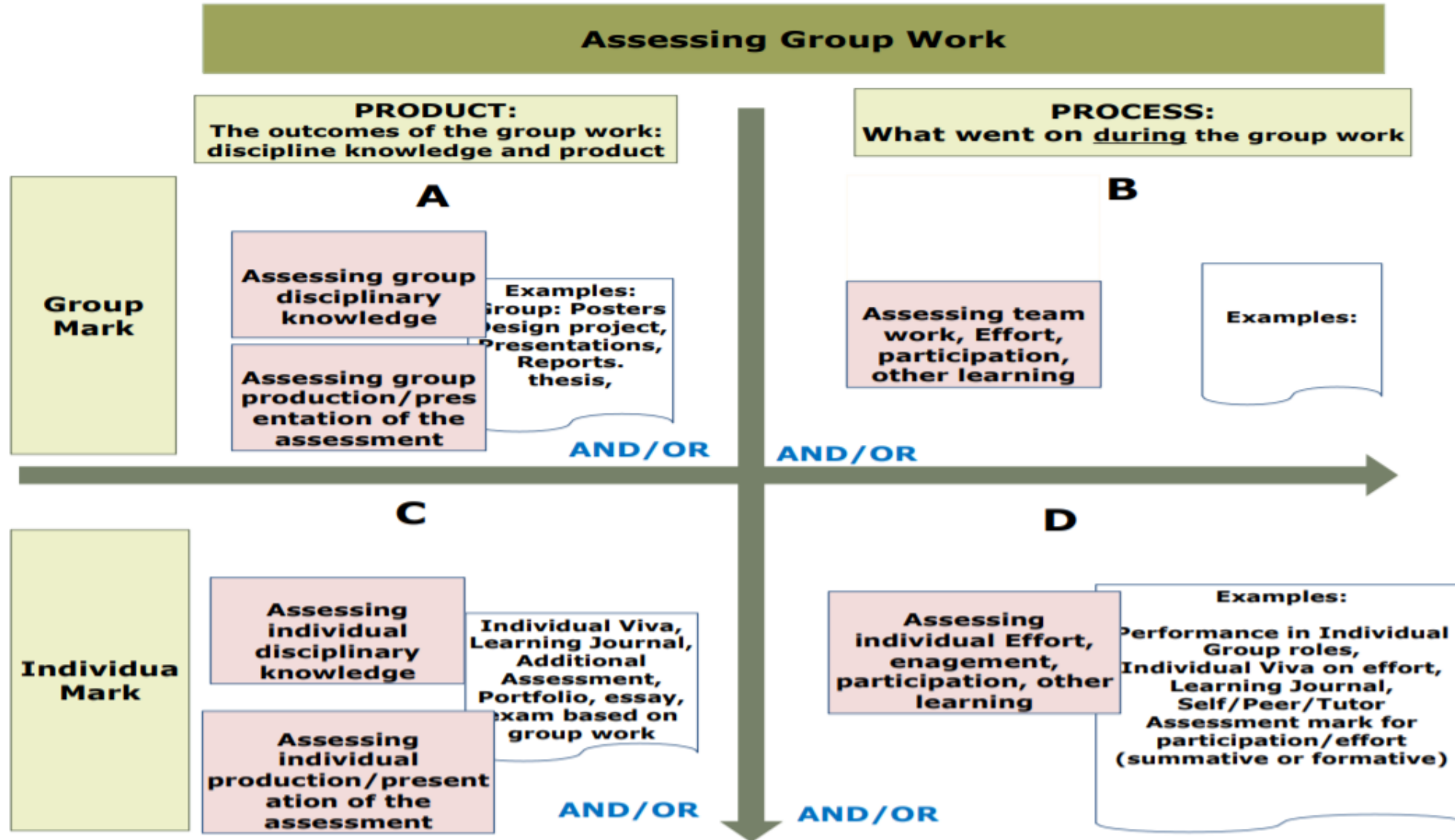


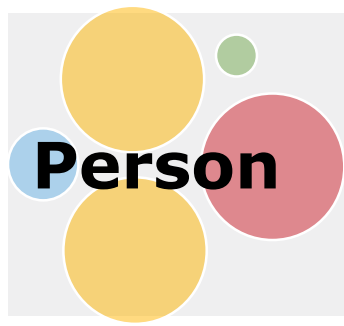
Process



Product

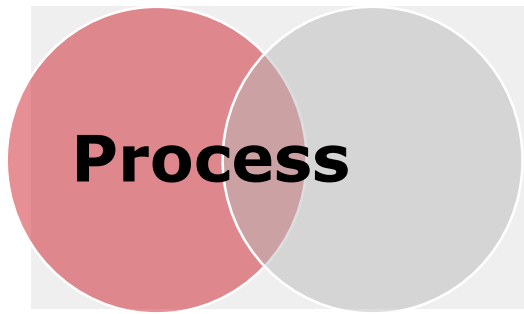
Assessing Group work





Assess individual group members based on how they perform in an **individual assignment**, task or exam question.

- May involve allocating specific tasks to individual group members, setting an assignment based on the group work (to be completed on an individual basis), or setting an exam question.
- This method of assessment would form only a part of the overall assessment of the group and not be the only assessment method used. Otherwise it can decrease students motivation to collaborate. 50% group 50% individual is a good balance.
- Take care in designing the individual assessment/task/exam question, to ensure that high marks are only achievable by students who have fully participated in the group project.

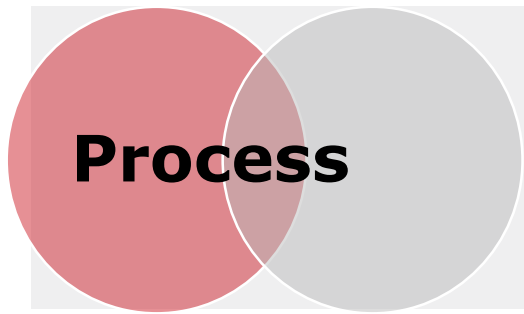


Teachers moderate the group mark for each student

- Only suitable for observable classroom activities. Instructor must be able to monitor contributions and participation of individuals.
- All work undertaken should be thoroughly documented in journals or 'log books' to detail individual contributions.
- Instructor must develop a clear and transparent grading system to assess individual contributions.

Example: evaluation of team behaviour using teamwork logs:

- what steps have you taken to organize your teamwork?
- what steps have you taken to monitor the effectiveness of your team?
- what steps have you taken to improve the effectiveness of your team?
- what problems have you encountered in working as a team and how did you tackle them?
- if you were to embark on a second, similar task as a team, what would be different about the way you go about working, and why?



Students moderate the marks from overall group mark by teacher

- Set clear guidelines for peer to peer feedback. E.g. use of appropriate language and criticism.
- Sanctions in the form of % reductions may be imposed by group if individual contributions do not meet minimum expectations. These may be rescinded if improvements occur.
- Use of formative only peer to peer assessment has been reported to improve both involvement and quality of outcomes in group projects.

Product

Peer assessment is assessment that is undertaken by a student to assess the contribution of peers to group work

- Strive to ensure anonymity as best you can.
- Students must be familiar with the criteria and framework for assessing their peers
- Develop peer assessment forms that adopt a holistic approach rather than a category-based approach - focus on participation and engagement.

Distribution of a pool of marks

- Award the group a mark equal to $(group\ mark) \times (no.\ of\ group\ members)$
- Let group divide marks among themselves



Product

Self-assessment is assessment that is undertaken by a student to assess their own contribution to group work

- Works well for STEM subjects
- Spend time in early sessions training students to self-assess
- Use for low stakes assessment

Product

On-line assessment tools to assist instructors in gathering information from students and provide feedback to individuals within groups.

- Be aware of the restrictions with each system
- CATme provides the most comprehensive on-line tools and tutorials and is free to use.
- Be aware of the hype! Each on-line system promotes itself. Impartial comparative assessment of on-line tools is in short supply.

Some dates...

**Next group work session –
December 7th 12.00-2pm**

*Hands-on workshop on
implementing group work in your
teaching*



References

McCrea, R. et al (2016) *Facilitating group work: a guide to good practice*.
<https://arrow.dit.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=ltcpgdprp>

ASKe (2009) Getting the most from Groupwork assessment.
<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147552288>