

Turning Groups into Teams

Friday, Oct. 27; 8:30 - 9:50am, Knight Library, Media Services, Proctor Classroom, Room 42

Many courses require group projects as a significant part of the class. Such assignments can receive a negative reaction from students—"I end up doing all the work", "We can never find a time to meet", "Can we kick someone out of our group if they aren't doing anything?"—are common complaints. We'll explore specific strategies that instructors can use to make class projects good learning experiences for students.

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Note: Material taken verbatim from cited sources.

Recommendations for Using Small Groups (L. Dee Fink in Michaelsen, et al, 2004, p 13)

	Recommendations of:	
	Cooperative Learning	Team-Based Learning
AREA OF AGREEMENT:		
Groups work in-class or out-of-class?	In-Class	In-Class
AREAS WHERE RECOMMENDATIONS DIFFER:		
Duration of groups:	Half-term (or so)	Whole term
Size of groups?	4 or fewer students	5-7 students
Use assigned roles?	Yes	No; counterproductive
Spend class time teaching and analyzing group process skills?	Critically Important	Nice but not critical
Grade the group work?	Maybe; maybe not	Critically important
Ensure prompt feedback on individual and group performance?	Nice but not critical	Critically important
Use peer assessment?	Maybe	Critically important

The Four Essential Principles of Team-Based Learning (Michaelsen)

<http://www.ou.edu/idp/teamlearning/docs/Getting%20Started%20with%20TBL.pdf>

1. Groups must be properly formed and managed.
 - Minimize barriers to group cohesiveness
 - Distribute member resources
 - Learning teams should be fairly large and diverse
 - Groups should be permanent
2. Students must be made accountable for their individual and group work.
 - Accountability for individual pre-class preparation
 - Accountability for contributing to their team
 - Accountability for high-quality team performance
 - Accountability and rewards
3. Group assignments must promote both learning and team development.
4. Students must receive frequent and immediate feedback.
 - Timely feedback from the Readiness Assessment Tests
 - Timely feedback on application-focused team assignments

Four Questions (Michaelsen-Video Clip and Michaelsen, Knight, & Fink, 2004, p. 256)

http://ouvs.ou.edu/IDP/Clip05_Four_Questions.htm

1. What do I want students to be able to DO when they've completed this unit of instruction?
This defines the desired outcomes in behavioral terms.
2. What will students have to KNOW in order to do #1?
This defines the content that must be covered in assigned readings or in other ways.
3. How can I ASSESS whether or not students have successfully mastered key course concepts?
This guides the selection of questions for the Readiness Assessment Tests (which enable instructors to pinpoint their input/lectures on only the specific points that need further clarification).
4. How will I tell if students will be able to USE their knowledge of key course concepts?
This guides the development of projects and exams that require students to use the concepts to solve the same kinds of problems they will face in subsequent course work and/or future jobs.

Forces that Promote Social Loafing (Michaelsen, Fink, & Knight)

<http://www.ou.edu/idp/teamlearning/docs/Activity%20Design.pdf>

Some individuals naturally resist participation (shyness).

Some individuals prefer to dominate discussions.

Members may believe they lack the content knowledge required for making a meaningful contribution.

Members may not be committed to the success of the group. *

Members may not be concerned about appearing to be disagreeable or overly aggressive. *

The task may be inappropriate for groups because it:

 can be completed by one or two members working alone.

 does not require members to reach and agreement.

* These are especially important problems with new groups.

Assignments that Promote Group Cohesiveness (Michaelsen, Fink, & Knight)

<http://www.ou.edu/idp/teamlearning/docs/Activity%20Design.pdf>

Does it promote a high level of individual accountability for team members?

Does it bring members into close physical proximity?

Does it motivate a great deal of discussion among team members?

Does it ensure that members receive immediate, unambiguous, and meaningful feedback (preferable involving direct comparisons with the performance outputs from other teams?)

Does it provide explicit rewards for team performance?

Team-Based Learning Instructional Activity Sequence (Michaelsen)

<http://www.ou.edu/idp/teamlearning/docs/Getting%20Started%20with%20TBL.pdf>

(repeated for each major instructional unit, i.e., 5-7 per course)

Initial Exposure

Practice Applying Course Concepts

“Final” Assessment

← In-Class – Primarily Group Work →

	Readiness Assessment		Group Work on Simple Problem(s)		Group Work on Complex Problem(s)		Graded Problem Solving
Study of Basic Concepts		Work on Simple Problem(s)		Work on Complex Problem(s)		Review	

← Outside Class – Primarily Individual Work →

The 8 Most Common Myths About Teamwork by Christopher M. Avery, Ph.D.

<http://www.christopheravery.com/press/articles/Teamwork.Media.Kit.pdf>

Myth: Individuals aren't responsible for the quality of their team experience because teamwork is a group skill.

Truth: This is a popular belief that causes even the smartest and most highly skilled individuals to excuse their poor performance by saying, "I got put on a bad team." Individuals make a vast difference on teams and should act on all of their personal abilities to affect their entire team's performance.

Myth: Managers and consultants are responsible for building teams.

Truth: Teambuilding is a series of specific communications or conversations that occur between people who share responsibility to get something done. Team members can and must learn to have these conversations on their own, particularly since a manager or consultant isn't always there.

Myth: Team members' skills are more important than their motivation.

Truth: When teamwork is important, skills should come after factors like drive, energy, interest, motivation, and enthusiasm because it's shared desire—not talent—that creates teamwork. It's also true that low motivation is more infectious on teams than high motivation. And while skilled individuals act within their roles, committed team members improvise to get the job done.

Myth: For a team to be really successful, its team members must like one another.

Truth: Teams that encourage affinity for a shared task—not for one another—create the strongest group cohesion. Rather than using exercises and techniques to promote friendships, they work together to adopt a common focus so that team members see good reasons to work with one another.

Myth: Team members must subordinate their self-interests for the good of the team.

Truth: Responsible team members retain their personal power. They find a way to align their self-interests with the team assignment, knowing that "going along" without passion or commitment can take the team to where no member wants to go.

Myth: Team members must choose or compromise between getting the job done and treating one another humanely.

Truth: The best teams believe that the task can get done and that team members can have an extraordinary experience.

Myth: Teambuilding means taking time away from "real work" at offsite events.

Truth: Teambuilding happens in the course of work.

Myth: A team that starts on the right track stays on the right track.

Truth: A number of events can occur during the life of a team to break the team's healthy dynamics. To stay "built," team members should pinpoint problems as they arise and address them immediately.

Teamwork is an Individual Skill by Christopher M. Avery

Conversation One: Focusing on the Collective Task

Conversation Two: Aligning Interests

Conversation Three: Establishing Behavioral Ground Rules

Conversation Four: Setting Bold Goals and Anticipating Conflicts, Breakthroughs, and Synergy

Conversation Five: Honoring individuals and Their Differences

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Resources

Team-Based Learning

<http://www.ou.edu/idp/teamlearning/materials.htm>

University of Oklahoma

Getting Started with Team-based Learning by Larry K. Michaelsen

<http://www.ou.edu/idp/teamlearning/docs/Getting%20Started%20with%20TBL.pdf>

Creating Effective Assignments for Teams: Lessons for Classroom Teaching and Faculty Development by Larry K. Michaelsen, L. Dee Fink, and Arletta Knight—University of Oklahoma

<http://www.ou.edu/idp/teamlearning/docs/Activity%20Design.pdf>

Video Demonstrations

<http://www.ou.edu/idp/teamlearning/video.htm>

TeamWisdom at Work

<http://www.christopheravery.com/press/articles/Teamwork.Media.Kit.pdf>

Lots of good resources by Christopher M. Avery.

Using group and team work: Web resources and bibliography

<http://www.ukcle.ac.uk/resources/temp/gwresources.html>

From the UK Centre for Legal Education.

Examining Students' Views on Group Working Assignments: Projects, Problems and Possibilities

<http://www.business.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/reflect/conf/2002/morgan/morgan.pdf>

Literature review on the topic.

TEAM LEARNING: PUTTING "sTEAM" INTO LEARNING GROUPS

http://www.bcm.edu/faced/team_learning/Word%20Docs/MichaelsenPutting%20sTEAM%20into%20Learning%20Groups.doc

Article by L. Dee Fink

Working in Teams (Penn State University)

<http://pbl.ist.psu.edu/teamwork/>

Guide for Students

<http://pbl.ist.psu.edu/faculty/>

Links for Faculty

Building Blocks for Teams-Student Guide

<http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/teams/student/index.html>

From Penn State University. Information for students.

Team Work

<http://dhc.ucdavis.edu/fh/tw/>

From Davis Honors Challenge at UC-Davis.

Links to a lot of information.

What are some strategies for helping students work in groups?

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/content/cntareas/science/eric/eric-7.htm>

By David L. Haury and Peter Rillero, 1994

Perspectives of Hands-On Science Teaching

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Problem Solving in Groups

[http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/TLBulletins/6\(1\)Groups.html](http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/TLBulletins/6(1)Groups.html)

From the Center for Instructional Development and Research at the University of Washington.

Manual for Working in Teams by Steve Borgatti

<http://www.analytictech.com/mb021/teamhint.htm>

Specific suggestions.

Cohorts and Teams in the First Semester at MIT Sloan

<http://ocw.mit.edu/NR/rdonlyres/Sloan-School-of-Management/15-328Team-ProjectFall2003/BA5F4B2F-C018-4559-A82E-43CDFDEF0CB8/0/cohortsandteams.pdf>

Powerpoint slides of how teams are used at MIT Sloan.

Teaching Teamwork Skills

<http://web.mit.edu/tll/tll-library/teach-talk/teamwork-1.html>

Article by Lori Breslow for the Teaching and Learning Laboratory Library at MIT

Vol. X, No. 4, January/February 1998

[Building Successful Student Teams in the Engineering Classroom](#)

By Stephanie G. Adams from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Books

Michaelsen, L. K., Knight, A. B., & Fink, L. D. (Eds.) (2004). *Team-based learning: A transformative use of small groups in college teaching*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.