

TFS QuickTool 9.7: Forms and Suggestions for Evaluating and Grading Group Learning

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How many times have you assigned group work in your class only to have that nagging feeling surface concerning accountability? Students often groan when group work is assigned because too frequently they carry the load for their group, yet receive the same grade as those who did little or no work.



At this point each student needs a total score for the project and this is done by totaling each result and placing this score on the Total Points Grading Form D.

Fair, accurate group assessments?

Cooperative learning is important in higher education classrooms, but for some, assessment issues have made this instructional technique problematic. Learning to work together for a common outcome seems essential for adequately preparing students for success in today's collaborative business climate. As educators who prepare learners for the workforce, it's essential that we provide classroom experiences that will better equip them cognitively and affectively for such tasks, while at the same time diagnose and treat the problem of fair assessment.

Research on cooperative learning (CL) finds that it promotes greater intrinsic motivation to learn higher-level reasoning and longer-term retention. Other outcomes associated with college success include creating a learning community and relationship building among diverse students (Johnson & Johnson, 1993), and improving self-confidence, interpersonal and communication skills (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998).

But how can you go about establishing cooperative learning experiences that your students find valuable and meaningful? One key to a successful cooperative learning activity is to be certain that student groups are being equitably assessed.

Challenges

For the learner this means being afforded evaluation procedures that reflect their individual efforts, as well as that of the groups. A colleague of mine also allows a group to fire a member who is not cooperative or productive. Some instructors have questioned whether group points foster inflated scores. Although the potential is there for such effects, Kaufman and Felder (2000) found that group ratings were not inflated and highly correlated with students' final grades in the course.

A three-part system

I have found three essential components that work to achieve equitable assessment and student efficacy in cooperative work:

- Individual accountability.
- Group accountability.
- Peer review.

In this model, each person works to produce a group accountability factor. Plus, there are the individual performance ratings and a peer assessment factor. Ultimately, these three scores combine to create a total score representative of the student's and the group's functioning within the group-learning process.

Get personal

Individual accountability results when each student has an element of the project to do and is scored separately from the group outcome. If the project includes a presentation, this too becomes part of the individual accountability.

For example: Group 1 presents on President Obama's Race to the Top program. Each student takes one element of the law and prepares a handout or paper that is given to the class or the instructor. Individual accountability on the paper, and the group presentation is scored by the instructor using Form A.

Group accountability is achieved by the instructor rating the group on their overall presentation on the topic and the creation process using Form B.

Peer review occurs when each student in the group scores each of the other members using Grading Form C. This form is designed to be a basic, but clear indicator of who carries the weight in the group. The peer scores are averaged and recorded for each person.

Presentations

If your learning groups are responsible for a class presentation, I have a few suggestions:

- On the day of the presentation, give each group member enough Peer Assessment Grading Forms C for each member of their group. Therefore, if there are five in a group, give each member four sheets, unless you also want them to score themselves.
- Also, on the day they present or submit their project, give one member of each group **one** Instructor Scored Group Accountability Grading Form B. Ask the students to fill in each member's name and the title of the presentation. (I use this grading form to record the details of each member's presentation.)

Section II. Summary of Forms

Form A

Use this form to rate each individual group member's performance during the presentation or later as you evaluate their learning project product.

Form B

Next, use Form B to record your overall group performance evaluation during the presentation or later upon your evaluation of the learning product.

Form C

After the presentation or product evaluations are complete, tally the students assessment points from their group member's performance evaluation on their Form Cs.

Form D

Next, place each group's grading forms and project papers together in a file folder. A total score is then computed using Form D. Here's how I accomplish this:

- Begin with Form C and examine each group for any unusual point spreads. If these are found, which are rare, throw out the high and low scores. Otherwise, average the scores for each participant and list the score on the Composite Evaluation Form D.
- Now compute the total score for the group project; this is done by adding the scores from each form and placing this number on the Composite Evaluation Form D.

This group evaluation management system recognizes and rewards their efforts while minimizing your potential problems.

References:

- Johnson D.W. & Johnson R.T. (1993). What we know about cooperative learning at the college level. *Cooperative Learning*, 3(3), 17-18.
- Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R.T., & Smith, K.A. (1998). *Active learning: Cooperation in the College Classroom*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Co.
- Kaufman, D.B. & Felder, R.M. (2000). Accounting for Individual Effort in Cooperative Teams. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 89(2), 133-140.

Section III. Printable evaluation forms A-D, one to a page; see pages 4-7

Individual Performance Evaluation Form A

Completed by instructor

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Student: _____

Evaluation Items:	Points Range(____)	<u>Earned</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Correct grammar, writing mechanics and spelling.	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation effectiveness	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Data, arguments, and conclusions	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Three or more references sited using APA or MLA.	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____pts.)	_____

Comments: _____

Total Points A: **Possible** _____ **Earned** _____

Group Performance Evaluation Form B

Instructor-scored evaluation of the group's performance as a whole.

Evaluation Type:

- Presentation _____
- Activity _____
- Learning product _____
- Other _____

Note: The entire presentation or activity is scored and all members share that score.

Group members (List names): 1. _____
 2. _____ 3. _____
 4. _____ 5. _____
 6. _____ 7. _____

Topic/Title of presentation, activity, or project: _____

Evaluation Items:	Points Range (____)	Earned
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____ pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____ pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____ pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____ pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____ pts.)	_____

Total Points Group Eval: **Possible** _____ **Earned** _____

Group Member	Instructor comments on individual performances
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____

Group Member Evaluation Form C

Students assess their own group member's performances individually

Student Evaluator's Name: _____

(One sheet for each group member.)

Group member's name: _____

Activities/Characteristics/Performance Evaluated:

Evaluation Items:	Points Range(____)	<u>Earned</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Correct grammar, writing mechanics and spelling.	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation effectiveness	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Data, arguments, and conclusions	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Three or more references sited using APA or MLA.	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	(____pts.)	_____

Total Points C:

Possible _____ **Earned** _____

Composite Evaluation Form D

Instructor completed, total points awarded

Combination of A, B, and C evaluation forms

Student: _____

Evaluation Items:	Points Possible	(____)	<u>Earned</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Grading Form A: Individual Accountability for Project Work Outcomes			
Points awarded by the instructor.		(____pts.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Grading Form B:			
Points awarded to the Each Member		(____pts.)	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grading Form C: Peer Assessment.		(____pts.)	_____
Total Points	Possible	_____	Earned _____

Overall Project Grade _____