

Evaluation of Groups

A good rule of thumb is:

The more the group grade counts in an individual student's final grade, the more closely the instructor should monitor group progress. If a large class prevents following the progress of each group, the group grade percentage should be lower.

For a group to function effectively, everyone has to play a positive role. However, only the members can really evaluate how well the group is functioning.

Individual accountability

Ensure that each student is individually accountable with little possibility of having free rides.

It may seem paradoxical, but ensuring that each individual is accountable for learning the work is one of the most important elements of successful group work. Failing to ensure this is a common cause for the breakdown of collaborative group work. Learning is ultimately an individual process but well-functioning groups help each person learn.

There are several ways that an instructor can build in accountability.

- At the very least, every group assignment must carry a statement that the work was shared fairly by all group members, and the statement must be signed by each member.
- Every group project must include a statement that itemizes what each person contributed to the project (editing, writing, proof-reading, graphics, programming, research, etc.)
- A group evaluation early in the project will surface any latent problems before the project is too far along.

- Frequent individual assessments will make sure that no one is coasting along on the work of others. Some cooperative learning advocates suggest that the results of individual assessments should also be shared with the group.
- Students should realize that one person in the group might be called upon to answer for the whole group.
- Group performance incentives can be made dependent on individual performances achieving a specified level.

The University of Wisconsin has a good [website \(LINK http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/archive/cl1/CL/doingcl/grades.htm\)](http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/archive/cl1/CL/doingcl/grades.htm) that suggests various ways of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of groups.

Carnegie Mellon University has a couple of webpages that discuss [general methods of assessing group work \(LINK https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/howto/assesslearning/groupWork.html \)](https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/howto/assesslearning/groupWork.html) and the [advantages and disadvantages of each method \(LINK https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/howto/assesslearning/groupWorkGradingMethods.html\)](https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/howto/assesslearning/groupWorkGradingMethods.html)