

BEL+T Session Collaboration & Collusion



msd

Melbourne
School of Design



This BEL+T session explored two sides of sharing in a learning environment. This package includes supporting resources that were used in the session activities and relate to 8 key challenges.

- Designing Successful Group Projects
- Developing Assessment Tools For Collaborative Projects
- Group Formation Strategies
- Writing A Group Contract
- Supporting Student Groups Working On Collaborative Projects
- Drawing The Line Between Collaboration And Collusion
- Peer Assessment And Adjustment Factors
- Detecting Academic Misconduct

BEL+T sessions investigate key learning and teaching issues with ABP staff. Connecting staff around these challenges, exploring new approaches, and investigating what is happening in built environments learning and teaching at the Faculty of ABP, and the Melbourne School of Design.

Activity 1 Designing Successful Group Projects

What are graduate attributes?

Generic graduate attributes are the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future.

-Bowden *et al.*, 2000

Graduate attributes are also referred to as “generic skills” or “transferable skills” to imply that they can be achieved in any disciplinary context. Scholars have identified the challenge of how graduate attributes inform curriculum design and learning experiences, as well as the variance in how academics understand the meaning of each attribute.

Are group projects an effective way of achieving certain graduate attributes?

Past studies have found that students identify attributes like problem-solving and communication skills as improving through group work projects regardless of whether the design of projects have followed best practice (see Colbeck, *et al.* 2000). One potential impediment to achievement that has been consistently identified, however, is student attitudes towards group projects. The way that objectives and challenges of group work get communicated and managed, therefore, can play a significant role in their success (Pfaff and Huddleston, 2003).

Best practice for writing project briefs

As a reflection of a teacher’s philosophy and mindset, project briefs are an opportunity to communicate certain scholarly and professional values to students. To be most effective, these documents should be written using warm and friendly learner-centred language that explains expectations in a way that encourages and motivates students. The tone should “anticipate positive student outcomes, rather than merely attempting to prevent problems” (Slattery & Carlson, 2005: p. 159).

Briefs can serve a range of purposes, such as:

- Setting the tone of the project and/or subject
- Motivating students to set lofty but achievable goals
- Structuring students’ work over the duration of the project
- As a contract between staff and students about their mutual responsibilities
- As a planning tool for staff

References and Resources

- Barrie, S.C. (2007). A conceptual framework for the teaching and learning of generic graduate attributes. *Studies in Higher Education* 32(4): 439-458.
- Bowden, J., Hart, G., King, B., Trigwell, K. & Watts, O. (2000). *Generic capabilities of ATN university graduates*. Teaching and Learning Committee, Australian Technology Network.
- Colbeck, C.L., Campbell, S.E., & Bjorklund, S.A. (2000). Grouping in the Dark: What College Students Learn from Group Projects, *The Journal of Higher Education* 71(1): 60-83.
- Fraser, K. & Thomas, T. (2013). Challenges of assuring the development of graduate attributes in a Bachelor of Arts. *Higher Education Research & Development* 32(4): 545-560. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/07294360.2012.704594?needAccess=true>
- Harnish, R. J. & Bridges, R. K. (2011). Effect of syllabus tone: students' perceptions of instructor and course. *Social Psychology of Education*. Available at: https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/effect_of_syllabus_tone_student_perceptions_of_instructor_and_course_spe_2011_0.pdf
- Pfaff, E. & Huddleston, P. (2003). Does it Matter if I Hate Teamwork? What Impacts Student Attitudes toward Teamwork, *Journal of Marketing Education* 25(1): 37-45.
- Slattery, J.M. & Carlson, J.F. (2005). Preparing an Effective Syllabus: Current Best Practices. *College Teaching* 53(4): 159-164.

Activity 2 Developing Assessment Tools for Collaborative Projects

According to Carnegie Mellon's [Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation](#), the main principles for assessing group work are:

- 1. Assess individual, as well as group, learning and performance.**

Balancing students' overall mark with individual and group-based components is meant as a motivational strategy: "This strategy gives diligent students a greater sense of fairness and control and discourages free ridership."

- 2. Assess process as well as product.**

Assessing process typically demands that you require students to self-report via team evaluations, peer evaluations, and/or self-evaluations: "If developing teamwork skills is one of your learning objectives for the course, it's important to assess students' progress toward that goal. In other words, you should assess process (how students work) as well as product (the work they produce)."

- 3. Make your assessment criteria and grading scheme clear.**

"It's always important to articulate your performance criteria so students understand your expectations and standards. This is especially true if you are emphasizing skills that are not usually assessed, such as the ability to resolve conflict, delegate tasks, etc. Criteria for evaluating both product and process can be communicated by giving students a group work rubric before they begin their work and then using it to provide meaningful feedback during and at the end of the project. It's also important to think about how you will weigh the various components of group projects in your grading scheme...A number of dimensions of group work can factor, either formally or informally, into a student's grade. What's important is to think about what dimensions of student performance matter to you and how your grading criteria and the weighting of assessment components can help motivate the behaviors you want to see."

References and Resources

Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation. (2019). "How Can I Assess Group Work?" Carnegie Mellon University. Available at:

<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/teach/instructionalstrategies/groupprojects/assess.html>

Links to sample group assessment rubrics:

<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/examples/courselevel-bycollege/hss/tools/jeria.pdf>

[https://www.rit.edu/affiliate/weimpact/documents/FinalWEIMPACT_Teamwork%20%20Rubric%202%201%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.rit.edu/affiliate/weimpact/documents/FinalWEIMPACT_Teamwork%20%20Rubric%202%201%20(2).pdf)

Activity 3 Group Formation Strategies

Team Formation: Which method is best?

Group composition in collaborative projects can affect how efficiently group members work together and how much relevant knowledge they can share (Eberly Centre, 2019). The methods that instructors use to group students for collaborative projects can be broadly categorised under the following approaches:

1. Random

Participants are grouped according to a factor that has no relationship to *who* the student is or their level of *experience and knowledge* of the topic. The method often involves assigning students with a number and creating a rule for how the numbers relate. For example, grouping numbers in sequential order (1,2,3,4) or numerical duplication (all the 4s).

In small classes this can be done on the spot by the facilitator. In large classes the coordinator can apply the [=RAND](#) function in Microsoft Excel, or use the [list randomizer](#) tool by Random.Org.

2. Instructor-generated

Participants are grouped by the instructor according to predetermined criteria. This approach requires the facilitator to know something about the students and want to create a certain type of group dynamic. The *specific criteria* used to inform the grouping of students will vary across subjects and instructors. [Oakley and colleagues \(2004\)](#) have following suggestions for instructors who are planning to group students together for assessment purposes:

- Form teams whose members are diverse in ability levels, who have **common blocks** of time in which they can meet outside of class,
- Avoid **isolating students from underrepresented populations**, particularly when they are new to the course and their peer group,
- Use a **pre-class questionnaire or in-class activity** at the onset of term to establish ability levels, availability and student interests; and
- For long term projects, **dissolve and reform teams** after 4 to 6 weeks, unless all group members want to stay together.

The [CATME Tool](#) (Comprehensive Assessment of Team Member Effectiveness) includes a 'team-maker' service that assigns students to groups using instructor-specified criteria.

3. Self-selection

Participants form their own groups, with little or no input from the instructor. The instructor may set criteria that students have to follow such as the size of group and/or the group composition (i.e. gender, experience, discipline). The instructor may assist the process by facilitating activities that help students to learn something about their peers, before they form groups. This may include: individual [SWOT analysis](#), [Pecha Kucha](#) of past projects and speed-dating games for students to summarise career aspirations, extra-curricular activities and work experience.

References and Resources

Oakley, Barbara., Felder, Richard., Brent, Rebecca., Elhadj, Imad. (2004). Turning student groups into effective teams. *Journal of Student Centered Learning*. 2. Available at:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242350622_Turning_student_groups_into_effective_teams

Links to tools

<https://info.catme.org/catme-tools/team-maker/>

https://www.mindtools.com/worksheets/Personal_SWOT_Analysis_Worksheet.pdf

<https://www.pechakucha.com/fag>

<https://www.random.org/lists/>

<https://exceljet.net/excel-functions/excel-rand-function>

Activity 4 Writing A Group Contract

Using contracts/charters to encourage self-management and productive collaboration

The primary purpose of the team charter is to clarify team goals and objectives as well as assign clear expectations to team member accountability. -Schultz et al., 2010

According to Schultz et al (2010), team charters can help promote positive themes of collaboration identified by students and deter “free-loading” if:

- Team members clearly define assignment outcome expectations on grade, format, timing, etc.
- Group engagement procedures allow for balanced input by each team member
- Member roles and responsibilities are clearly defined upfront.
- Penalties are clearly documented.
- Deadlines for individual contributions are clearly defined.
- The charter receives endorsement by all team members.

The University of Waterloo’s Centre for Teaching Excellence has put together a site of tips for instructors called [“Making Group Contracts”](#) that includes the following steps:

- Explain what a group contract is and why you are asking groups to develop one
- Identify intended learning outcomes
- Provide resources to guide students through the process (templates, samples, etc)
- Give students time in class to write the contract

References and Other Resources

Centre for Teaching Excellence. (2019). "Making Group Contracts." The University of Waterloo. Available at: <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/group-work/making-group-contracts>

Chang, Y. & Brickman, P. (2018) When Group Work Doesn't Work: Insights from Students, *Life Sciences Education*, 17(52): 1-17.

Felder, R.M., & Brent, R. (2001). Effective Strategies for Cooperative Learning, *Journal of Cooperation & Collaboration in College Teaching* 10(2): 69-75.

Hesterman, S. (2016). The Digital Handshake: A Group Contract for Authentic eLearning in Higher Education, *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 13(3).

Levin, P. (2003). Running group projects: dealing with the free-rider problem, *Planet* 9(1): 7-8.

Schultz, J.L., Wilson, J.R, & Hess, K.C. (2010). Team-based Classroom Pedagogy Reframed: The Student Perspective, *American Journal of Business Education*, 3(7): 17-24.

Another sample contract can be found here:

<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/teach/instructionalstrategies/groupprojects/tools/TeamContracts/TeamContract.docx>

Activity 5 Supporting Student Groups Working On Collaborative Projects

Rules of engagement: How to support students

Instructor motivation behind the use of group projects can vary from those who seek to reduce grading responsibilities to instructors who truly believe in the value of group projects to a student's career success. Independent of motivation, instructors should realize that once they decide to use a group project, they have a responsibility to students to fulfil their role in as positive a manner as is possible.

-Kenneth, et al. 2001.

In subjects that involve group work, the role of the instructor shift from 'expert/authority' to 'facilitator/coach' (Nilson, 2001). Students report greater satisfaction with group work if the instructor has implemented methods to monitor and manage groups (Chapman and Van Auken, 2001). Therefore, before a group project commences best practice requires the instructor to provide students with information about the type/s of support they will offer all groups at each stage of the collaborative process. Below is a summary of stages that groups typically go through during a collaborative project.

Tuckman's Stages of Group Development (1965)	Stahl's Model of Collaborative Knowledge Building (2000)
Forming Group is formed, and the assessment task is introduced. Group develops a broad strategy for how they will complete the task within the timeframe.	Public statements Individuals express broad ideas about how the group could respond to the task.
Storming Group start to develop their response to the task which often results in some disagreement or conflict as group members want to approach the task differently.	Argumentation and rationale The merit of individual ideas is debated by the group. Group members clarify any misunderstandings.
Norming Group members agree on how they will complete the task and take responsibility for a share of the workload.	Shared understanding The group reaches a consensus about how they will respond to the task and assign roles/responsibilities.
Performing Group members focus on achieving a common goal.	Collaborative knowledge The group undertakes the work to complete the task.

The type of support offered by an instructor will vary depending on factors such as how the groups were formed, what the task is, how the task will be assessed and the students' prior experience of group work and the topic. Most of the support offered can be categorised broadly into the following types:

- Coaching on how to work together
- Consultations for feedback on progress
- Answering questions
- Conflict resolution

References and Resources

- Chapman, Ken & Van Auken, Stuart. (2001). Creating Positive Group Project Experiences: An Examination of the Role of the Instructor on Students' Perceptions of Group Projects. *Journal of Marketing Education*. 23: 117-127.
- Nilson, Linda. (2001). *Teaching at its Best: A Research-Based Resource for College Instructors* (Third Ed). Jossey-Bass. California: San Francisco
- Stahl, G. (2000). A Model of Collaborative Knowledge-Building. In B. Fishman & S. O'Connor-Divelbiss (Eds.), *Fourth International Conference of the Learning Sciences* (pp. 70-77). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Tuckman, Bruce (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*. 63 (6): 384-99.

Activity 6 Drawing The Line Between Collaboration And Collusion

Drawing the line between collaboration and collusion

According to the University of Melbourne's [Academic Integrity website](#):

Collusion happens when more than one student contributes to a piece of work that is submitted as the work of an individual. Individual assessment work should be entirely the work of the student submitting that work.

Working together with other students on a piece of work that will be submitted for individual assessment is not permitted and can result in an accusation of academic misconduct for all the students involved.

It is also not permitted to work together on work in progress, research summaries, or drafts, as these preliminary works may result in similarity of the finished products of the students involved.

Discussing the material and ideas you are learning with your colleagues is beneficial and is encouraged. However, when you start to write down the material that you will use for assessment, make sure this is entirely your own work, and do not share it with other students.

Collusion is different from group work where students are instructed by the university to work together and the work is then assessed as a group effort.

The Open University's [Developing Good Academic Practice course](#) includes further discussion on how to distinguish collusion from good collaborative practices:

In both formal and informal examples, good collaborative practices involve two or more individuals working together to help each other understand:

- *what a specific concept or topic means (often by explaining it in different ways to that presented in the course materials);*
- *how this information can be applied to other areas of their study.*

It may also involve discussing and developing general approaches on how to solve a particular problem or task, but without going into specific details or giving away the precise method or answer. Collaboration linked to assessed work stops at the level of general discussions, with each student writing up their answer individually, in their own time and in their own words.

In summary, good collaborative learning means working collectively on a topic or task to help each other understand what is involved and/or what needs to be done. Good collaboration does not involve discussing the precise answers or giving an exact approach to solving a question that will form part of some assessed work.

References and Resources

University of Melbourne. (2019) "Collusion: Academic Integrity." Available at:
<https://academicintegrity.unimelb.edu.au/forms-of-plagiarism/collusion>

Open University. (2019) "Developing Good Academic Practice." Available at:
<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/educational-technology-and-practice/educational-practice/developing-good-academic-practice/content-section-0?active-tab=content-tab>

Activity 7 Peer Assessment And Adjustment Factors

Methods for Deriving Individual Marks from Group Work

Bowe et al (2016) reviewed the literature on group assessment strategies and identified six possible methods of assessing the contribution of individuals within groups, noting: "it is evident from our research that there are benefits and challenges associated with each method."

Methods include:

1. Including an individual assessment component e.g. individual tasks/assignments/exam questions (with relative weights assigned to individual and group components)
2. Instructor moderating the group mark for each individual on the basis of special knowledge about the individual (only applies to supervised work that the instructor has observed directly)
3. Students moderating each other's group mark on the basis of their knowledge about that individual
4. The use of peer assessment
5. The use of student self-assessment

Sample forms here: <https://staff.unimelb.edu.au/arts/teaching-learning/arts-teaching-innovation/ati-resources-ongoing-projects/assets/documents/word/Self-Evaluation-of-Contribution-to-Group-Work.docx>

6. The use of online resources for peer and self-assessment (for example CATME, Sparkplus, WebPA)

What is an adjustment factor?

An adjustment factor is a formula used to moderate individual marks based on the overall group mark. The numerical value of each individual factor is derived from one of the assessment methods listed above. Therefore, this process involves translating qualitative statements about the quality of a student's contribution and teamwork behaviour into numerical values. Whatever form this takes, the process should be explained to students prior to commencing the project.

References and Resources

Bowe, L., Delaney, M., Fitzgerald, B., MacCann, P. & Ryan, C. (2016) Methods for deriving individual marks from group work. Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology. Available at: <https://arrow.dit.ie/lcpgdprp/1/>

Brown, R.W. (1995). "Autorating: Getting individual marks from team marks and enhancing teamwork." *Frontiers in Education Conference Proceedings*, IEEE/ASEE, November 1995.

D'Arcy, L., Geoghegan, E., Gibson, R., Hines, A., MacAnaney, O. (2016). *An exploration of fairness in the assessment and process of student group work*. Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology. Available at: <https://arrow.dit.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=lcpdprp>

Teaching and Learning Services (2018). *Using peer assessment to make teamwork work*. Montreal: Teaching and Learning Services, McGill University. Available at: https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/files/tls/tls-group-peer-assessment-resource-doc-may-2018_0.pdf

E-Learning Group (2019). PAF – Group Peer Assessment. The University of Queensland. Available at <https://elearning.uq.edu.au/guides/group-peer-assessment/paf-view-and-moderate-result>

Activity 8 Detecting Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct

Below are types of poor scholarship and plagiarism that may constitute academic misconduct.

These were sourced from University of Melbourne's ['Academic Integrity' webpage](#).

<p>Verbatim copying / Direct copying / Uncited quote Copying directly from paragraphs, sentences, a single sentence or significant parts of a sentence without acknowledging the source. This is plagiarism.</p>	<p>Mosaic copying / Scaffolding Where the key points and structure of another person's work have been used by a student a framework for their own work without acknowledging the source. This is plagiarism.</p>	<p>Recycling This is sometimes called self-plagiarism or multiple submission. Students cannot re-use work that was submitted for assessment in any course at any university. This is plagiarism.</p>
<p>Inadequate paraphrasing This happens when students try to paraphrase another author's ideas, but their wording remains too close to the original text. This is poor scholarship and amounts to plagiarism.</p>	<p>Uncited paraphrase This is when you paraphrase another person's work but do not acknowledge the source. This is plagiarism.</p>	<p>Misrepresenting and misquoting When students cite a source correctly but misrepresent what that source claimed. This is poor scholarship. Alternatively, students may have deliberately taken the words or ideas of an author out of context to support their argument. This could constitute academic misconduct.</p>
<p>Over reliance on a source When a large proportion of a student's work is based on a single source or author. it may be that you have not read widely enough or considered other viewpoints on the topic. This is poor scholarship but does not constitute academic misconduct.</p>	<p>Ghost writing Having someone else knowingly write or produce any work (paid or unpaid) that a student submits for assessment. This is academic misconduct.</p>	<p>Collusion Collusion is when more than one student contributes to a piece of <i>individual</i> assessment that is then submitted as the work of an individual. This is academic misconduct.</p>

References and Resources

The University of Melbourne (2019). Academic Integrity. Available at:
<https://academicintegrity.unimelb.edu.au/forms-of-plagiarism>