

The Value of Academic Group Work: Faculty and Student Perceptions

LaBeouf, Griffith, & Schultz. (2014).

Group Work

Introduction

Literature

Hypothesis

Treatment of Data

Results

Conclusions/Recommendations

Introduction

Su (2007) called for more studies



Faculty n=330, Students n=1,589

Literature on Group Work

Business and industry encourage group work (Cain, 2013; Burgess, 2012).

Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing study

- Ideas come from working alone (Dunnette et al., 1963)

Cultures make difference (Popv et al., 2012)

Effective in Small groups (Van Hattum, 2014)

Students don't see value (Smith et al., 2010)

Hypotheses

Ha₁ Faculty positive towards group work

Ha₂ Students are negative towards group work

Ha₃ Faculty and students will have different perceptions

Method/Treatment of Data

Survey distributed via e-mail link

- 2,600 faculty – 12% return – n=330
- 10,659 students – 14% return – n=1,589

Likert scale – collapsed categories

- SA and A SD, D, and neutral

Quan - $\alpha=.05$ χ^2

Qual – NVivo 10 - trends in open comments

Quantitative Findings

Faculty – Group work (n=330)

- Has academic value (p=.000)
- Prepares students for future positions (p=.000*)
- Develops individual skills (working with groups) (p=.000*)
- Value to teaching outcomes (p=.000*)
- Would include in every class I teach (p=.075)
- Disagreed one grade for all (p=.000*)

Quantitative Findings

Students – Group work (n=1,589)

- Has academic value (50%, $p=.92$)
- Prepares students for future positions (51%, $p=.257$)
- Develops individual skills (working with groups) (52%, $p=.092$)
- One grade for all (59%, $p=.000^*$)
- Disagreed that they would take a course because it had group work (66% $p=.000^*$)

Faculty and Student Differences

Table 4: Summary of Questions Where Faculty and Student Perceptions Differed. (Chi Square, $\alpha=.05$).

Question	Faculty		Students		DF	Chi Sq.	p	Sig
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree				
(F) Requiring group work has academic value. (S) Participating in group research work is a good learning experience	259	64	791	795	1	99.622	0.000	Yes
Group research work is a way to prepare for future positions in the work force	259	64	810	765	1	90.01	0.000	Yes
Group work allows students to develop individual skills within the confines of group requirements	250	75	823	756	1	67.40	0.000	Yes
One grade was given for all group members regardless of contribution.	98	222	931	650	1	85.61	0.000	Yes
The group grade reflected group and individual contributions.	213	108	810	767	1	24.12	0.000	Yes

Faculty

(n=118 in open comment area)

(42) Student contribution to group grade

- Difficult to assess, “social loafing”

(20) group work not beneficial

(19) Not good for online environments

- Difficult to assess, time zone issues

(15) Prepares students for “real life”

Students

(n=692 in open comment area)

(266) Students not contributing

- “Social loafing”

(152) Not effective in online environments

(147) Dislike group work

(135) Collaboration difficult

- Time zones and work schedules

(71) Suggestions for instructors

- Coaching

Conclusions

Perception of Business/Industry preference

Individual contributions – “social loafing”

Hard for instructors to assess contributions

- Have student peer assessment

Assign groups by time zone

ERAU non traditional students/structure

66% of students felt grading was fair

Recommendations

Study group work in online settings

Differences in graduate and undergraduate perceptions

Business and Engineering vs. social sciences/humanities

Impact of culture, gender and personality on group work performance/perceptions

Use Qualitative and Quantitative tools

Questions?

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