

Peer Evaluation of Group Work

The most common problem that faculty members face when group projects or group work are part of the course is student complaints about the social loafers or absentee members that put an unfair burden on other group members. Yet with increasing class sizes, and the ensuing decrease in the opportunities for direct student-teacher interaction and discussions involving the entire class, group work can be a valuable resource. Group work can allow students to build the cooperative, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills that are developed through interaction and that are essential for success in the workplace. Student interaction, during and outside class, also keeps students coming back and has been found to be a critical element in student retention. How can we reap the benefits of group work and minimize the deterrents?

Following is an example of a suggested method, adapted from various sources, for the peer evaluation of group work. Here, group members evaluate each others' level of participation and quality of input. The specific criteria for participation and quality of input can be defined by the professor or by the group members as appropriate. If you would like further information on group skills that can form part of participation criteria, please contact the Walker Teaching Resource Center.

GROUP PARTICIPATION SCORES

	Group member A	Group member B	Group member C	Group member D	Group member E	Total Points	Participation grade
Group member A	X	30	25	30	40	125	50/50
Group member B	10	X	15	20	10	55	27.5/50
Group member C	25	20	X	20	20	85	42.5/50
Group member D	25	30	25	X	30	110	50/50
Group member E	40	20	35	30	X	125	50/50
Total = 100 %	100	100	100	100	100		

As you can see from the table, group members do not evaluate themselves. Each group member must assign a percentage out of 100 to each of their peers, based on the participation criteria. Total participation scores are then calculated for each student. In the above example, group participation is worth 50% of the final grade. A suggested method for converting total points to a participation grade for each group member is to use 100 or more points as a perfect grade (50/50 in this case). Individual group participation grades for those receiving fewer than 100 points are calculated by multiplying their total points by the value of the group participation mark and then dividing by 100 (e.g. for group member C: $85 \times 50 \div 100 = 42.5$). Students' grades for the group project can then be calculated based on the individual grade assigned to each student for group participation plus the group grade for the actual group assignment (if applicable). The percentage of the overall group assignment grade given for participation depends on how much weight you wish to give to participation on the overall group grade. This method can be adapted to suit the requirements and structures of individual courses.