

# Assessing Students Working In Groups

Stephen Barasi  
School Of Biosciences  
Cardiff University

# Why encourage students to work in groups?

- Approaches to assessing both the products of group working and the process
- What are the limitations of the available assessment strategies ?

# Advantages of group work:

- students are more likely to become actively engaged in their own learning
- they can explore different ways of working and learn from fellow students
- socialising aspect provides motivation and support
- experience of being a team player

# Group working in context

The curriculum is delivered exclusively by PBL and group work

Group work is part of a range of teaching strategies

When should students be introduced to group work?

# Assessment of students working in groups

- Product of group working
- Process of group working
- Reliable, fair and transparent

# Product of group working

- Written report, poster, oral presentation etc.
- Assessed using criteria provided or student derived criteria
- Performed by:
  - Group members
  - Students from other groups
- Tutor/facilitator

# How to assess the group process

general considerations:

- Use of a rational approach to working, eg. Seven Step model, time management etc,
- Using expertise of group members
- Participation of all members of the group
- Evidence of developing higher intellectual skills

# Assessing the group process

specific considerations:

- Personal responsibility
- Dealing with information
- Within group communication
- Critical/analytical skills
- Self-assessment/development



Categories	Outstanding (A+)	Poor (D)
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• brings new information</li><li>• communicates effectively</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• brings no new information</li><li>• rambles, inaudible, silent</li></ul>
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• completes assigned tasks</li><li>• listens to others</li><li>• encourages others to contribute</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• fails to complete tasks</li><li>• does not listen</li><li>• impedes others</li></ul>

Categories	Outstanding (A+)	Poor (D)
Self assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● accepts criticism</li><li>● able to change and correct weaknesses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● does not accept constructive criticism</li><li>● fails to change behaviour</li></ul>
Critical sense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● justifies comments with appropriate references</li><li>● promotes a deeper understanding</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● fails to justify comments</li><li>● fails to promote a deeper understanding</li></ul>

# Applying the Manchester model

- Formative assessments

self assessment period at the end of each session- students justify their grades

feedback invited from other students

facilitator completes a similar assessment

- Summative assessments

rely more on peer assessment

# Tutor/Facilitator effect

- Clarity of purpose
- Interrogative interventions:
  - what if.....
  - is there an alternative way of.....
  - does everyone agree with.....
- Scientific resource?
- Tutor variability?

# Group assessment

	Output	Process
Transparent	Yes	Yes
Reliable	Reasonably	?
Fair	Yes	?
Important	Yes	Crucial

# Level1 Physiology

## Threats to Homeostasis

- No didactic teaching
- Four problems over the year
- Each group presents a 10minute talk and writes a synopsis per problem- subject to an element of peer evaluation
- Each student writes a long essay

# Record of Group Meeting

Date:            Group No :    Convenor:

Topic discussed:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Decisions taken:

I agreed to:

Date of next meeting:

# Facilitator Assessment Form

Group No:      Date:      Facilitator:

- Attendance:
- Convenor appointed?
- All members contributing?
- Evidence that tasks are divided up
- Record of agreed tasks
- Evidence of forward planning



# Lecture vs Group Work staff hours

100 students/double module

Lecture based:		hrs
40 lectures		40
200 essays	200*10mins	30
coursework		15
Total		85hrs

# Group work-staff hours

## 100 students/double module

Class divided into 15 groups

Introduction- 2 hrs, class divided into

4 groups 8hrs

Group facilitation: 15mins\*8 30hrs

Assessment of 15min talks, 4/yr 15hrs

Marking synopses: 4/yr 10hrs

Marking essays: 2/yr 25hrs

Total 88hrs

# Group work- the problems

Is it effective and against what criteria?

Dedicated and committed staff required

Facilities for students to work in groups