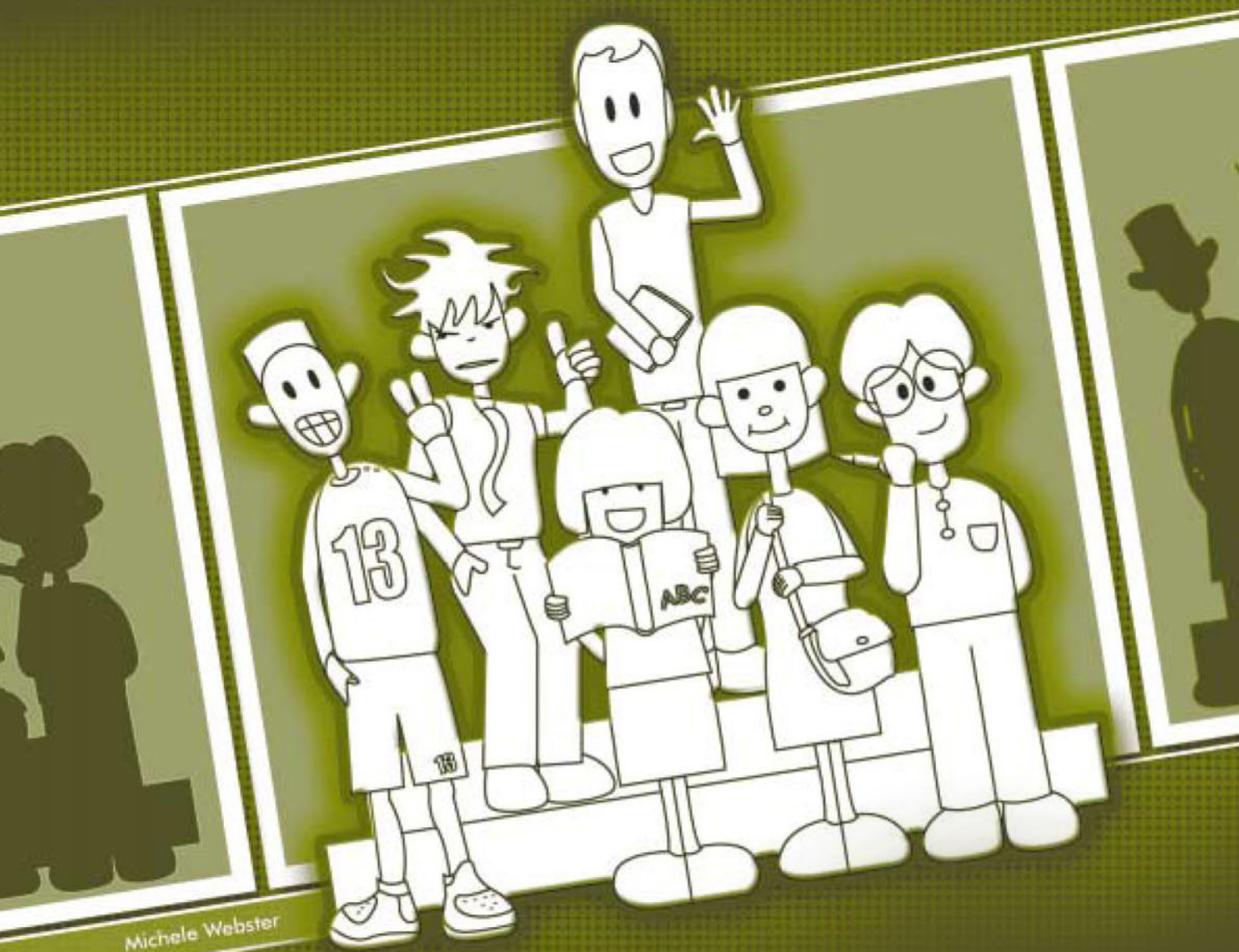


# Working With and Assessing **Student Groups**



Michele Webster

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# About This Guide

This guide has been written for Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) teachers who want to know more about working with and assessing student groups. These are complex subjects so there are no 'quick fixes'. This guide simply presents a range of ideas for teachers to think about, and try, with their own students. Hopefully, you will be able to develop strategies that work with your own students.

This guide was written with the aim of equipping you with ideas about:

- ❖ how to encourage students to work effectively and efficiently in groups, and
- ❖ how to assess the processes and products of group work.

The objectives are to:

1. Build on the sound assessment principles covered in the booklet *Assessing Students: An Introduction for IVE Teachers*.
2. Provide an overview of good practice in setting up group work.
3. Suggest ways of keeping student groups working productively.
4. Explore the main issues in assessing students in groups.

X Y Zee's case runs through this guide. It is based on the IVE teaching situation but X Y Zee is an entirely fictional character. It is suggested that you read the case and do the "think about ..." activities.

The guide contains several Black Line Masters (**BLM**) which are designed for you to use with your students. Please either just photocopy them or scan them into your computer (if you need to alter them to suit your own needs). Alternatively, you can find them under the Resources section of the CLT website.

As well as reading this guide, you should familiarise yourself with some important documents. You need to know the regulations that apply to assessment at IVE. Obtain and read the **General Academic Regulations (GAR)** and **Departmental Academic Regulations (DAR)** that cover the types of courses you teach. To find them on the Intranet:

Log on to <http://intra.vtc.edu.hk> > Informative > IVE Academic Handbook.  
You will be prompted to input your Username and Password.  
Click on B. IVE Academic Regulations, Guidelines and Procedures > GAR  
(note: there are several).

In addition, you should read the academic regulations and guidelines that apply to assessment. While you are logged on to the IVE Academic Handbook, look at those that relate to your teaching (for example, IVE Examination Regulations, IVE Appeals Regulations).

You also need to know any regulations that specifically apply to the course you are teaching - ask your Course Leader for a copy of the **Validated Course Scheme** document. Many (but not all) are now available on the intranet. Follow the link from the IVE Academic handbook. Click on E.> II > Approved Course Documents > By Discipline.



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Group work has both benefits and potential problems. If you decide that working in groups is the best way for your students to complete an assignment or project, then you will have to do a range of things:

- ❖ Decide on group membership.
- ❖ Write a briefing document containing the assignment/project details and the assessment criteria.
- ❖ Allow time in class for briefing the groups and answering questions.
- ❖ Ensure that the groups get off to a good start by suggesting ice-breaking activities and ways of establishing ground rules.

### In this section, we look at four topics

- 1.1 The benefits and problems of group work
- 1.2 Deciding group membership
- 1.3 Briefing the groups
- 1.4 Ice-breaking and setting ground rules

Section 1.5 gives you a checklist to think about when you next form groups, and Section 1.6 contains some useful websites that you may like to browse.

We also start looking at the case of IVE Teacher X Y Zee. You will see four short sections:

- ❖ Introducing X Y Zee (2 weeks before the start of term)
- ❖ X Y Zee decides how to form groups (week 1)
- ❖ X Y Zee forms groups and deals with student concerns (week 3)
- ❖ X Y Zee asks students to develop ground rules and keep a meeting log (week 4)

Please read them and do the accompanying “Think about ... ” activities.

## The Case of IVE Teacher X Y Zee

2 weeks before the start of term

My name is XY Zee and I have been teaching at IVE for four years. I teach second year students who are relatively inexperienced at working in groups. I have a cohort of 55 students to supervise and want them to undertake a group project which requires some secondary research (in the library and using the Internet) as well as some practical elements (a 'live' investigation).

In previous years I assessed students by requiring them to write a group report and do an oral presentation to the class. On the whole this was satisfactory, although I did have some concerns. I suspected that some students did more work than others and that some students re-wrote their classmates' work. I also had some students who came to me at the end of term, upset and angry about a range of issues which I found extremely difficult to resolve. I know that group work can be stressful for students and I find that marking group work fairly is very difficult.

This year I am trying something a bit different - I want them to do a poster presentation. I think that they will find this interesting but challenging. I also intend to monitor group progress more closely than I have done in the past and will require them to keep a meeting log. This year I will also allow for some self assessment and peer assessment. I have discussed with my Course Leader how this will work.



### Think about ... your own practice

1. Do you expect your students to do a group project? Does it involve both secondary research and practical elements?
2. How successful have you found group reports and oral presentations as ways of assessing students in groups? What difficulties did you encounter?
3. How closely do you usually monitor student progress?
4. Do you expect your students to keep a meeting log?
5. Have you used self assessment and peer assessment with your students? How successful was it?



## 1.1 The benefits and problems of group work

Group work is a feature of many IVE courses and there are sound educational reasons for organising students to work in this way. For example:

### Benefits to students

- ❖ Group work allows students to develop a range of useful teamwork skills. Teamwork is highly valued by employers who expect students to have developed skills such as communication, negotiation, project management, conflict resolution and problem solving. Group work helps students to be more work-ready.
- ❖ Students take on greater responsibility for managing their own (and their group's) learning. This is an important personal management skill valued by employers.
- ❖ Students are able to tackle more extensive or more complex tasks together than they could individually.
- ❖ Some students can help their academically weaker or slower classmates (peer tutoring). This also reinforces their learning.
- ❖ Group work can be motivating for students. It offers all students opportunities to interact, to be more creative in solving problems, to learn more and be more interested in (even excited about) the topics they are studying.

### Benefits to teachers

- ❖ If you have large classes, you can use your time efficiently. You can give better quality feedback to groups than to individuals.
- ❖ You can make effective use of your time by explicitly helping students develop a range of Key Skills in ways that are integral to your curriculum.

## Student concerns about group work

Despite the benefits of group work described above, sometimes students do not seem keen. Unfortunately some students may have had bad experiences with group work in the past. This may make them feel resistant to group work because they worry about a range of issues. For example:

"It can be really difficult to schedule group meetings at convenient times - people don't turn up and then the meeting time is wasted."



"I am not popular and no one wants to work with me. I just seem to think differently from the rest. I only want to work on my own."



"We spend a lot of time talking (or even arguing) amongst ourselves which is time-consuming and emotionally draining. The teacher doesn't see this, of course!"

"Some parts are harder than others. The strong personalities in the group always insist on doing the easy bits and calling themselves 'group leaders' so that they can boss me around."



"Teachers set group work to save marking time."

"Teachers only set group work because class sizes are too big for them to work with me individually."



"Because my written English is quite good, I always have to re-write the

group's report. The others have not worked hard enough - they should work to a better standard."



"I usually get good grades. When I do group work, my weaker classmates pull my marks down."

"I think that I get the work finished quicker when I work alone."



"I like to work with my friends - there are some classmates I don't like and I don't want to be in a group with them."

"When my classmates re-write my work I feel insulted - surely it is my ideas that matter, not how well I write. I do a lot of research and contribute a lot of ideas but no one gives me credit for them."



"I like to plan my work, but some people don't get their bit done on time. It holds me back and the final stages are really rushed. I hate the pressure."



"When we hand in a group report, I don't see how the teacher knows what I have done - we just get a group mark, it's not fair."



These expressions of concern can be seen to relate to a number of key issues that you need to think about when setting up group work. Consider doing the following:

- ❖ Taking the time to explain to your students your rationale for setting group work.
- ❖ Setting in place procedures that monitor group progress and group dynamics that help students recognise and resolve conflict and difficulties as they arise.
- ❖ Reassuring students that their individual effort and achievement in assessed group activities will not be 'lost' in group marks by providing students with clear assessment criteria.

## 1.2 Deciding group membership

A group is a collection of two or more people who work together to achieve common goals. Effective groups do two things:

- ❖ They achieve high levels of task performance.
- ❖ The people involved in the group work well together.



This concept of group effectiveness is simple, but actually achieving it can be very challenging!

### Group size

One thing that certainly makes a difference to group effectiveness is group size. As groups get larger, individual members need to spend more time and effort communicating with each other and coordinating their activities. If groups get larger than seven people, the opportunities for discussion and participation usually diminish. Some members may feel inhibited in speaking out in a large group, while an outspoken group member may dominate. Groups of over seven people often split into subgroups which may be detrimental to effective group work.

Group size	Appropriate for ...
❖ Two or three students	❖ Appropriate for less experienced (first year) students and shorter tasks.
❖ Four to seven students	❖ Appropriate for more experienced (second and final year) students working on large-scale projects over a whole term.

### Odd or even?

Groups with an even number of members are more prone to sustained disagreement and conflict while working on tasks. This may be because an even numbered group can split into equal halves and it is therefore harder to establish a majority view. Think about the following advice:

<b>Choose an even-numbered group (2, 4, 6) when ...</b>	<b>Choose an odd-numbered group (3, 5, 7) when ...</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ The issue or problem is very complex.</li><li>❖ Careful choices have to be made.</li><li>❖ Consensus is very important.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Quick choices and decisions have to be made.</li><li>❖ Majority views are a sufficient basis for actions/decisions.</li></ul>

### Methods of group formation

The way a group is formed can have a critical impact on group effectiveness. There are several ways to form groups. You should therefore think carefully about the scope and purpose of group work as well as the type of students you have. Working with friends may be fine for small-scale, in-class activities. However, for larger projects where one of the aims is to develop students' capacity to work as part of a diverse team, then this approach may not be appropriate. There is a range of methods for group formation, including:

## Four Methods of Group Formation

### Random allocation

Use class lists, coloured cards or a numbering system to put students into random groups.

### Stratified random allocation

Divide students into categories and form groups by randomly selecting numbers from each category. If the groups might benefit from peer tutoring, use mid-term test scores or other methods to distinguish above average achievers from those needing extra support, in order to form appropriate categories.

### Common interest groups

These can be formed in several ways.

- ❖ Put students into comfortable social or interest groups based on 'common interest' ice-breakers.
- ❖ Form groups of students wishing to investigate the same topic.
- ❖ Form groups based on common meeting time or geographical location.

### Group roles\*

Define the different roles that will be needed for the group task and select students for groups based on role preference. Form groups with a range of complementary skills and backgrounds.

\* There are different approaches to group roles (and different typologies for describing them). Belbin's Team Roles and the Margerison McCann Team Management Wheel are both well established. For more information, see the web sites on page 16.

Each of these methods has advantages and disadvantages. Using a range of methods can certainly enliven group work in a tutorial situation because students interact with classmates whom they may not know well. They may concentrate on the activity in hand rather than using the time for social chat with their friends. If students are used to rotating around groups they may also be more willing to work with classmates who are not close friends (and, of course, they may make a wider circle of friends). Collaboration is a key component of group work; encourage your students to share information and ideas and produce an outcome that draws on their combined strengths.

## XY Zee decides how to form group

Week 1

I have thought a lot about how to form groups for the assessed work (poster presentation). I have now decided to use the factor of “common interest” as my grouping method. A list of fifteen topics has also been devised. I gave out the topic list at the end of a lecture with instructions for students to read it and rank the topics from their most preferred to their least preferred.

I knew that my students would try to form groups with their friends, so I stressed that it was my job to allocate students to groups and that “friendship” is not the only factor I would take into account.

I handed out the project briefing notes and assessment details in this week’s tutorials. These include information about how the self and peer-assessment component of their grade will work. I asked students to read them and told them that I would go through everything the following week and answer questions.



### Think about ... Zee’s approach to group formation

1. Do you approve of the way Zee has decided to form groups?
2. Have you ever used common interest groups as a method of group formation? How successful was it? What did your students think?
3. Do you give students briefing notes and assessment details during tutorial time? How much time do you allow for reading or for questions?

## 1.3 Briefing the groups

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Students work best when they understand what is expected of them. The more complex the activity you expect a group to do, the more important it is that they are adequately briefed. Before you write the briefing sheets for coursework activities that are part of your assessment package you must think about how individual effort (and achievement) within a group will be recognised and rewarded. If you wish to have an element of self assessment or peer assessment, then you must specify for the students how this will work in practice. You may also need to train students in the skills of self and peer assessment if they are unfamiliar with these. First-year students in particular are likely to be 'novices' and it is unhelpful to assume they will be able to handle self and peer assessment competently without support. Having a classmate say unkind things about your work in public can be demoralising and distressing for students - giving and receiving feedback is a skill that students need to develop. **Section 3.2 Self assessment** and **Section 3.3 Peer assessment** will discuss these areas in more detail.

For some group tasks, you may wish students to consider group processes as well as the topic they are studying, researching or discussing. For example they could identify how they have split the workload up, the processes they used to reach agreement, and the interpersonal skills that they used. Encouraging students to think about what they contribute to group work may be helpful when they have to work together for large and complex projects and assignments. **Section 2 Keeping Groups Going** will provide some ideas and templates that you might find useful.



## X Y Zee forms groups and deals with student concerns

Week 3

My students gave me their ranked lists last week. I spent three hours sorting out the groups (it took longer than I had expected). Some topics are more popular than others and I thought about whether having more than one group working on a topic was acceptable. I decided it was. I also thought about whether all groups should be the same size. I decided that they should be and that five students should form a group (11 groups of 5 = 55 students in total). I checked my mid-term quiz scores to ensure that no group contains only weak students and made some minor adjustments.

I then typed up a 'master list' of students and topics which I posted on the Year 2 notice board (as I had told them I would). I created slides with this same information, and showed them at the end of my next lecture. I talked about the skills that working in teams develops and that I expected students to work with people other than their immediate friends.

Afterwards, two students came to see me unhappy about their group allocation. One has had a bad experience with a classmate in a previous project and I listened but did not give him an immediate decision. The other wanted to do a different topic. I agreed to have a look at what could be done. I talked to the Year Tutor about the two students and we agreed that the first student be allowed to move to a different group and that the 'difficult' classmate be called in for a discussion about her attitude and behaviour. The second student would be left in her original group. I would explain that I felt she got her second choice topic and that moving her would open the floodgate for others to change their topics. I felt all the topics were equally challenging.



### Think about ... Zee's workload forming groups

1. Do you feel that Zee's time sorting out the groups was time well spent?
2. Would a group size of five be acceptable/workable with your own students?
3. Do you agree that it is important to brief students about team work?
4. What problems have you encountered with students as they start a piece of group work? How do you deal with student complaints?

## 1.4 Ice-breaking and setting ground rules

Many researchers have studied groups to try to understand how they develop. There is a range of different models that provide insights into group development (see **Useful websites** on page 16 for more information). The common agreement is that when people come together and form a group there is an orientation phase at the start. This is a time when group members get to know each other and they start to talk about the task in hand. If your students are working with classmates who are all close friends, then this phase might last a short time. If, however, you have allocated students to groups, then you should expect this orientation phase to take some time and for some group members to feel tense because they do not know the communication rules and expectations of their peers. If your student groups will be working on a long-term, large project together then encouraging them to use ice-breaker activities may be beneficial. There are many games for team building that can be adapted and used with students. There are also questionnaires (and less formal quizzes) that are linked to team roles as well as to personality. All of these might give students some insights into themselves and their approach to group work. They also highlight for students the reasons why some classmates think (and work) differently, and allow them to appreciate that diversity has benefits as well as difficulties.

### Ground rules

It is a good idea to ask students to spend some time discussing (and agreeing on) how they will work together. Suggest that they produce a list of ground rules and refer to them if any disputes arise. The establishment of ground rules (protocols for working together) is a good idea for student groups. This in itself can be an ice-breaker activity. If students can be encouraged to think about how they will work together, when and where they will meet, how they will deal with under-performers or non-attendees, how they will resolve conflict *before* any of these issues arise, then the group is likely to work more effectively. **BLM 1** provides instructions to students on how to go about developing their own ground rules.

#### **BLM 1 Developing your ground rules** (see page 41)

Source: Adapted from Brief Guide ... Working in teams <http://www.vtc.edu.hk/tlc/briefguide/teams/build.shtml>

### Project log

If students are working together on a project or task that will last several weeks, it might be useful if they keep a project log. This need not be complicated, but should encourage them to plan their work and ensure they finish on time and to an appropriate standard. **BLM 2** provides an example of project log that you can show your students.

#### **BLM 2 Drawing up your project log** (see page 42)

Source: Adapted from Gibbs (1998) p8.

## Meeting log

There are many ways to document group progress. A meeting log can be simple but effective. **BLM 3** provides a template for a meeting log that you could photocopy for your students to use. A meeting log can provide evidence for students to think about, if you require them to peer assess and/or reflect on their progress and approach to group work.

**BLM 3 Meeting Log** (see page 43)

### X Y Zee asks students to develop ground rules and keep a meeting log

Week 4

The student groups have all got started now. The group work runs between week 4 and week 12. They know what is expected of them.

Week 4 tutorial: I allowed students the last 20 minutes to start to agree on ground rules for their group project. I gave them a sample to review and encouraged them to customise it. I suggested that students finish this task in their first group meeting and that a copy be put into their group meeting log.

I also told students that I would post a sheet on their notice board listing my availability to see groups. I want to see each group during weeks 6 and 7 for a quick check-up to monitor their progress. Students are responsible for signing up (and turning up) for 20-minute consultations. They may also email me with any general questions.

Next week we will spend some tutorial time looking at examples of poster presentations, as this form of assessment is new to this group of students.



#### Think about ... your own practice

1. Do you encourage your students to agree on ground rules for group work? Would you allow them some in-class time for this purpose?
2. Do you require your students to keep meeting logs? Can you see any benefits of them for yourself and for your students?
3. Do you have a formal system of meeting student groups for consultations? How useful have you found such meetings?

## 1.5 Checklist for forming groups

Next time you have to form student groups, consider doing the following ...

	Check box
❖ Think hard about group size and whether odd or even numbered groups would be best.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ Form groups based on random allocation, stratified random allocation, common interest groups or group roles and explain to students the method you are using.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ Include information about your expectations of student participation in group work in your written (and oral) project brief/task description.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ Use some class time to form the groups and for group members to introduce themselves to each other. Encourage students to talk about (negotiate) their expectations, roles, meeting preferences and other practical arrangements. Suggest they draw up ground rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ Use ice-breaking activities that encourage students to identify strengths and other characteristics relevant to group work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ Ask the group to develop (and show you) their plan of how they will complete the group work on time, and to a good standard. Suggest they use some tools (such as a project log or Gantt chart).	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 1.6 Useful websites

The Learning and Teaching Centre provides a brief guide to working in teams that students should find useful. This online guide covers the following sections:

- ❖ Build a team
- ❖ Decide what has to be done
- ❖ Work as a team
- ❖ Make meetings productive
- ❖ Review progress

<http://www.vtc.edu.hk/tlc1/briefguide/default.html>

Small Group Development Theories are clearly explained on the following website. The work of four well-established researchers is explored (Tubbs, Fisher, Tuckman and Poole). If you want to know more about Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning (Tuckman's Small Group Development Theory), then this is a good place to start!

<http://www.abacon.com/commstudies/groups/devgroup.html>

From Queens University, Belfast comes useful information about effective team working. It covers:

- ❖ Preparation and ground rules
- ❖ Team membership (being a positive team member, leading/coordinating a team)
- ❖ Team diversity (and learning styles - activist, reflector, theorist, pragmatist)
- ❖ Conflict resolution
- ❖ Effective team meetings

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/cap/studentdevelopment/teamworkbis.htm>

A range of issues for teaching and learning (student groups) has been explored by staff at the University of Technology, Sydney. Read their report at:

<http://www.clt.uts.edu.au/Student.Groupwork.html>

All links worked February 2004.



If you form groups carefully, your students should get off to a good start with group work. However, you will still have to do a range of things:

- ❖ Monitor group progress, particularly if they are working on large, complex projects or tasks.
- ❖ Guide students and stress the importance of keeping their work progressing and the inter-personal relationships stable and friendly.
- ❖ Think about how best to help students handle the conflict that working in groups often causes.

### In this section, we look at three topics

- 2.1 Group behaviour
- 2.2 Monitoring group progress
- 2.3 Dealing with conflict

Section 2.4 has a checklist that you might want to refer to when your students are working in groups.

Section 2.5 contains some useful websites where you can find further information.

We also continue looking at the case of IVE Teacher X Y Zee. You will see two short sections:

- ❖ X Y Zee sees some problems (week 7)
- ❖ X Y Zee sees some progress (week 9)

Please read them and do the accompanying "think about ..." activities.

## X Y Zee sees some problems

### Week 7

My student groups are now three weeks into their group project. The groups have been formed but I am concerned about their progress.

Last week I asked students to bring in their meeting logs. Having read these through there are a number of things I need to think about.

- ❖ Not all groups have included a copy of their ground rules.
- ❖ Some groups have not included a project schedule (which is a project requirement).
- ❖ Some groups have only met once and I am concerned that they will not get finished on time to a good standard.
- ❖ One group is already experiencing difficulties as one student has not turned up for any meeting.
- ❖ One group did not submit a meeting log.

I intend to do the following:

1. Ask the groups to send one person to my office this afternoon to collect the meeting logs and discuss progress with me.
2. Speak privately to the student who has not attended her group meetings and try to find out why.
3. Ask all the students in the group who did not submit a log to see me and check what's happening.
4. Remind all groups that they need to see me again in weeks 9 and 10.



### Think about ... Zee's problems

1. Do you agree that Zee should be concerned about his groups' progress?
2. Have you ever experienced similar problems with your own students?
3. Do you think that Zee's four intentions are reasonable?
4. Can you think of other things that Zee could do?



## 2.1 Group behaviour

Groups have two important needs (task needs and maintenance needs). Both of these must be managed if the group is to work well. Each student can help his/her group's development by doing things specifically to enhance these two needs. Student groups are not like work-based groups in that there is no 'manager' in charge. There are no levels of hierarchy already established and group members do not come to a group with specific (and well-defined) areas of expertise. In some ways this makes group work for students more challenging than it would be in a work situation.

Group behaviour has been the subject of much research activity. The work of Blake and Mouton offers some practical insights for teachers and students. They identified three groups of behaviours that occur in most groups:

- ❖ Maintenance-oriented behaviours
- ❖ Self-oriented behaviours
- ❖ Task-oriented behaviours

Ideally a group should be built around maintenance-oriented behaviours and task-oriented behaviours. Students should be discouraged from using self-oriented behaviours as these can disrupt the group and interfere with the successful completion of the group work. All three types of behaviours are likely to be present in student groups. You may find it worthwhile to name and explain these behaviour categories to your students. Encourage them to comment on the behaviours their group members show and they will be developing useful teamwork skills. **BLM 4** provides a handout that contains the Blake and Mouton framework along with a short activity that you could use with your students.

### **BLM 4 Three types of behaviours that occur in most groups** (see page 44)

Source: Adapted from Blake and Mouton (1994)

## 2.2 Monitoring group progress

If students are working in groups on a large or complex task, they should be encouraged to plan their work carefully. Project planning could include drawing up a Gantt chart to schedule activities, meetings and critical deadlines. Students themselves should be encouraged to maintain steady progress and give their teacher regular reports.

Project Steps	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Specify Requirements	■					
Preliminary Research		■	■			
Meetings with Tutor			◆			◆
Practical Work			■	■		
1st Draft of Project				■	■	
Plan Presentation					■	■
Editing + Proofreading ( For Presentation and Project)					■	★

You might also consider asking students to do a group meeting check-up! **BLM 5** contains a quiz activity for your students to try.

### BLM 5 Group meeting check-up quiz (see page 45)

Adapted from Jacques (1991) p179.

An alternative self-assessment quiz (a simpler one) is given in **BLM 6**.

### BLM 6 Group check-up quiz "How are we doing?" (see page 46)

Adapted from Day, Grant and Hounsell (1998)

You might also want to keep a record of your meetings with student groups. **BLM 7** provides a template that you can use and/or adapt. This encourages you to record the purpose of the meeting, the focus of the meeting (broadly what you talked about), issues arising (difficulties, constraints, concerns identified by you and/or the students), and action agreed by the students and by the teacher. There is also space to agree on the date of the next meeting, if one is required.

### BLM 7 Meeting/Consultation Log (see page 47)

Adapted from Day, Grant and Hounsell (1998)

## Group roles

Margerison and McCann (1985) distinguished nine major work functions (a team wheel). These are advising, innovating, promoting, developing, organising, producing, inspecting, maintaining and linking. Any team will have to do all these tasks to work effectively. Students can be encouraged to identify their 'natural' role functions but they should also recognise the value to the team in having a balance of roles.

Using a different typology, Belbin (1981) draws on nine team roles that fall into three broad categories: action-oriented roles, people-oriented roles and cerebral roles. Students are likely to have a dominant team role type which is their source of both strengths and weaknesses. Student groups that understand team-role theory and their own team-role type can benefit from this self-knowledge. They can make adjustments and fill any 'gaps' in their team.

There are copyright difficulties with reproducing the typologies here. Follow the links given at the end of this section in **Useful websites** or have a look in your library for more information about Margerison and McCann's team wheel and Belbin's team roles.

## The teacher's role in keeping groups going

Teachers have a critical role in helping students to be successful in group work. Generally, student groups expect you to:

- ❖ Demonstrate an interest in their progress and learning achievement
- ❖ Deal with issues of inequality
- ❖ Receive and acknowledge work that is submitted
- ❖ Give feedback and allocate grades/marks

Furthermore, groups may also expect you to be:

- ❖ Aware of, and help resolve, internal group problems

How you do these things is a matter of personal preference (and to some extent, personal style). Some teachers see themselves as 'coaches' or 'mentors' and expect to be quite actively involved with student groups. Others see themselves as 'advisors' and expect to be asked/consulted by student groups. Another role teachers can play is that of 'facilitators' where they stimulate groups to think about/do certain things and to work through the consequences together. In order to help groups that are not working well a teacher may have to be a 'mediator' to help students find acceptable and workable solutions. Even if you have a preferred style, you may have to use other styles according to the nature of each group.

Students sometimes complain that after they get started with group work, the teacher no longer takes an interest in their learning, or the way the group is functioning. Teachers have many pressures and working with groups can be time-consuming. It is important to build some mechanisms into your course to monitor group progress - especially for assessed group work. When allocating time for an assessed group project you should allow time for regular group meetings with yourself (or another teacher if you team teach) in attendance.

Many of the problems with 'difficult groups' can be reduced if they are detected early. There is a range of ways to do this, including:

- ❖ **Consultation times.** Specify when you will be available to see students. Write these into the subject/project briefing document. Students need to be clear about what they should do, and who can help, if they are having a problem in their group.
- ❖ **Formal 'check-up' times.** Problems with a group project often surface around the mid-point. Students may not come forward for help without encouragement from the teacher. Specify how often you expect to see the groups. **BLM 7** is a meeting/consultation template that you could use to record your discussion with them.
- ❖ **Ground rules.** Encourage students to negotiate their own ground rules and use them. **BLM 1** provides instructions to students about how to go about developing their own ground rules.
- ❖ **Individual areas of responsibility.** Ask students to define what their role(s) and task(s) will be in the group and to report on these regularly. They should think about this as early as possible in the group work. **BLM 2** is an example project log with information for students on how to complete the log. Ask students to bring the log to class or to a meeting with you during their 'check-up' time.
- ❖ **Communication technology.** If you use WebCT, encourage students to use discussion folders for asking group-work questions. They may also use e-mail to get quick responses to brief questions.
- ❖ **In-class time.** If possible, allow some formal class time for students to work on their project and/or discuss how their group is working. If no class time is given for group-maintenance activities, students may think that this is not important. In class time you may also be able to identify groups containing students who are not turning up or contributing.
- ❖ **Group-meeting evaluation.** From time to time encourage students to evaluate how productive and effective their meetings are. They should think about their behaviours and their roles. **BLM 5** is a quick quiz that your students could use at the end of a group meeting.
- ❖ **Interim reports.** If student groups are involved with large or complex projects it may be worthwhile requiring them to present interim reports so that you can give them timely feedback.

The amount of support students need for group work will vary, depending on the type of work the students are expected to do and their experience with group work. First-year students (who are new to each other and to IVE and you) will need more support than second-or final-year students. The level of teacher intervention may also vary - some groups may need more help keeping on target than others, especially if they experience high levels of conflict among group members.

#### **BLM 5 Group meeting check-up quiz (see page 45)**

Source: Adapted from Jacques (1991) p179.

## X Y Zee sees some progress

### Week 9

My student groups have got three more weeks until the group work is completed. I have seen most groups twice and will see the rest early next week.

Overall, I am happy with the progress of my groups. I have had to see two groups weekly. One group has had non-attendance problems by two of their members. I have spoken to the Year Tutor. One student has a history of poor attendance and family difficulties; another has been off sick for a number of weeks. I have agreed (with the Course Leader) to extend the submission date for this group. The second group has had quite serious inter-personal conflict. We have managed (I think) to resolve this situation but it has been quite time-consuming.

I have arranged for the posters to be displayed in a classroom on Tuesday morning (week 12). I would like students to be able to see each other's work before doing the assessment (grading).



### Think about ... group progress

1. Would you want to see groups twice during an eight-week project?
2. Do you agree that Zee should see some groups weekly? How else could he monitor group progress?
3. Have you ever had groups of students who experience serious inter-personal conflict? At what stage in the group work did the problems surface? What were you able to do?

## 2.3 Dealing with conflict

Most student groups will work quite well with little intervention if clear roles and criteria have been established. However, as a teacher, you must be aware that some groups may experience difficulties and conflict that they cannot resolve alone. Ineffective groups achieve low levels of task performance and the students involved in the group work poorly together, feel frustrated, unhappy and even angry.

Some students may not contribute to group work because of sickness or other personal problems. Some may not contribute fairly or be able to work harmoniously in a group. Some students do not turn up for meetings or do not communicate with their group members. You can see symptoms of a group that is not working well - progress is slow, the work is not up to standard, students are frustrated and demotivated.

It is not acceptable to leave groups to work out their own problems, especially if the group work is a major piece of assessed work. Equally, it is unreasonable for students to expect their teachers to be able to solve their problems for them. If a group is not working well, then they need to communicate with each other and with their teacher. Together they must uncover the causes of their difficulties (not just the symptoms) in order to move forward.

You should expect some degree of conflict in all your student groups (it is a natural and an inevitable part of working together). Aim to help your students (1) become more skillful in recognising and respecting points of view that are different from their own, (2) accept and provide feedback, and (3) manage and resolve conflict. Students may need some training to do these things effectively!

If you are aware that a group is experiencing difficulties, a starting point might be to call a group meeting with all of the group members. You do need all of them, especially if poor attendance or poor contribution to the group appears to be an issue. Groups sometimes split into sub-groups with quite different perspectives about what has happened. You should expect students to be tense and defensive (even tearful) and emotional. Allow some time in a quiet place where you can sit together and not be interrupted. Ask them to focus on questions such as "What is the main problem in this group?" and "What could be done about it?", "What is your immediate concern?" and "What would you like to say to the group?" To clarify the issues these approaches may be useful:

- ❖ **Round table talk** - Allow each group member in turn to speak freely about what is going on. Do not enter into group discussion until everyone has spoken once.
- ❖ **Write the problems down** - Ask students to write down what they see as the problems. Go further and ask them to write down any solutions they can find that might solve some or all of the problems.
- ❖ **Using evidence** - Ask students to bring along any 'evidence' they have to support their claims (for example a meeting log or project planner). If there are claims and counter claims, it can be difficult to judge who is telling the story accurately. If your group-work brief asked for clear written progress reports to be kept, you will find them invaluable in the case of group breakdown.

- ❖ **Independent observer** - In situations that are proving difficult to resolve, or where you feel the need for support, consider using a colleague as an independent observer. They may either sit in on the discussion just to listen (and advise afterwards), or may contribute more actively if that is what you prefer.

Sometimes the source of conflict is not obvious, or you cannot find a mutually acceptable solution immediately. In this situation, schedule another meeting (the next day or soon afterwards) to give everyone some time and space to think about things. At the next meeting see if the students have some acceptable proposals; you may also need to table some ideas of your own.

In cases of extreme group breakdown you may need to split the group or negotiate an acceptable task alternative. You should confer with your Module Leader or Course Leader (or Head of Department) before making any promises to students about altering their assessment package.

## 2.4 Checklist for keeping groups going

Next time you have students working in groups, consider doing the following ...

	Checkbox
❖ Explain to students how groups have two important needs (task needs and maintenance needs). Discuss how self-oriented behaviours disrupt the group and how task-oriented behaviours and maintenance-oriented behaviours help the group.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ Read about group roles and choose a typology that you feel comfortable with, and can explain to, your students. Ask them to identify their dominant role type and explore the extent to which all the roles are covered in their group.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ Demonstrate an interest in each group's progress and learning achievements. Use 'check-up' activities and encourage students to see you (for example, use consultation times, email, and discussion folders).	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ If possible, allow some in-class time for students to work on their project and/or discuss their progress. Show them the value of group maintenance and identify any difficulties that need to be addressed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ Help students prepare for difficulties/conflicts by establishing mechanisms for dealing with them. Where groups are breaking down and are not able to resolve disputes, consider calling a group meeting with you as facilitator.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 2.5 Useful websites

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The Margerison McCann Team Management Wheel is a well established approach to team roles. Find out more at:

<http://www.orientpacific.com/tmi.htm>

Belbin's Team Roles are well known. He has nine team roles; action-oriented roles (shaper, implementer and completer finisher), people-oriented roles (coordinator, team worker and resource investigator) and cerebral roles (plant, monitor evaluator and specialist). Find out more at:

<http://www.belbin.com/belbin-team-roles.htm>

To read more about "Enhancing Experiences of Groupwork" have a look at this site provided by The University of Technology, Sydney. Strategies to help groups caught in conflict are covered in Unit 5: Monitoring Groups. All seven units are well worth a look, there are lots of resources and activities to try.

<http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/enhance/groupwork/index.html>

All links worked February 2004.



If students work in groups, you may use formative assessment (providing regular feedback to help them improve) and summative assessment (measuring their performance at the end). The assessment used should be both valid and reliable. You will have to:

- ❖ Ensure that your students understand the form(s) of assessment used.
- ❖ Be given adequate support and guidance to self assess and/or peer assess (if this is required).
- ❖ Encourage students to think about the group practices and group processes they used (even if this is not formally assessed by you) so that next time when they work in a group they can do even better.

## In this section, we look at three topics

- 3.1 Group work assessment issues
- 3.2 Self assessment
- 3.3 Peer assessment

Section 3.4 has a checklist that you might want to refer to when you are thinking about assessing students in groups. Section 3.5 contains some useful websites where you can find further information.

We also look again at the case of IVE Teacher X Y Zee. You will see two short sections:

- ❖ X Y Zee assesses his students (week 12)
- ❖ X Y Zee reviews his approach to assessing students in groups (week 15)

Please read them and do the accompanying "think about ..." activities.

## X Y Zee assesses his students

### Week 12

This week the poster presentation was due. The students did well and enjoyed seeing the displayed posters. The Course Leader and a couple of my colleagues also came into the classroom to see them and talk to the students. I have now taken the posters down and made a start on assessing them. As an in-class activity (tutorial time) I asked students to fill in a group work self-assessment sheet identifying what they saw as the strengths and weaknesses of their work, how they might improve it and the grade they expected. I asked them what they would pay more attention to next time they have a group project to do. I also asked them to note what they would like me to comment on. All these will be looked at when I am grading the posters. I intend to give each group a comments sheet (without the grade).

Each group has submitted a peer-assessment sheet which will constitute 10% of the final grade. This was done during their final group meeting. Students have submitted their meeting log and project plan. I will need to look at these as well as the posters.



### Think about ... assessment

1. Have you ever tried using poster presentations with student groups? How successful were they?
2. Have you ever allowed your students to see the finished work of other groups? What do you think they gained from this?
3. Would you use a group work self-assessment sheet with your own students?
4. Have you ever given your students a comment sheet about their work? Did you feel they appreciated your feedback?
5. Do you think that 10% is a reasonable contribution for peer assessment?

## 3.1 Group work assessment issues

Group work that is part of each student's assessment package is often carried out quite independently of the teacher. When it comes to giving grades to your students for group work you will have to decide whether to give all group members the same grade or to find a fair way to give students different grades.

### All group members get the same mark

This works when:

- ❖ The group task requires a high level of collaboration (otherwise you undermine the educational purpose of the task).
- ❖ You want to encourage collaboration by removing any rationale for competition within the group. There is an incentive for all group members to do their best and work together. There is no incentive for some group members to keep information or ideas to themselves.

Remember that if you want to give all members the same mark, you can add a separate related assessment component to an exam. This reinforces the fact that the group work topic(s) will feature in the examination paper and should be taken seriously and/or revised thoroughly. Individuals who have worked hard at the group-based project or tasks should 'shine' in the exam. Of course, you will have to justify the need to revisit the subjects or topics already assessed in group work.

### Each group member gets a different mark

This works when:

- ❖ You want to reward outstanding performance and penalise poor performance or "freeloading" (a "freeloader" is a student who benefits from the work of the group without contributing to the group - can also be called a "passenger").
- ❖ You want to give students an incentive to do their best on those aspects of the task that affect their individual mark. You will have to think about how to mark based on standards reached by each student, rather than on the comparative performances of group members.
- ❖ You need to distinguish between different bands of students (for example, distinction, credit, pass and fail). If your course relies on a high level of assessed group work, at least some of the marks on which grades are based should be awarded individually.

## Ways of giving individual marks for group tasks

If you want to give group members individual marks for an assessed group-work activity, there is a range of ways to do this.

### **The group completes the task and there is one product**

The product (for example, a written report or artifact) is graded by the teacher. The teacher adjusts this for individuals based on his/her observation of student participation/contribution. Alternatively, students use peer assessment and/or self assessment to reflect individual contribution and effort. The group can be required to keep minutes of their meetings, noting who attended, who agreed to do what, and who in fact did what. This record can provide the teacher (and the group members) with evidence of individual contributions. Project logs or diaries can serve the same function.

### **The group completes all or most of the task, but each student produces an individual 'product' to get a mark/grade**

This is usually an individual report or artifact/model or piece of reflective writing about the group work. It could also be that students share research information or preparatory work before starting on their own 'product'. You will have to decide whether to allocate a percentage of the grade for the group-based component. If the group-work element is ungraded there may be an incentive for students not to put much effort into collaborating.

### **Each member of the group has his/her own part of the group task**

Students clearly identify which part they have contributed and get a mark/grade based on the quality of this. A difficulty can be in designing an assessment task which contains parts that are equally challenging and equally interesting to students. A further difficulty is if later parts of the task depend on the quality of early parts. Students who take on later parts may feel penalised if their group members have not done well in early parts (or are running behind schedule). This type of group work may also suffer from poor integration.

It is good practice to ensure that students know and understand the assessment criteria before they start to work on group activities that are part of their assessment requirements. This is particularly important if peer-or self-assessment form part of their final grade. Examples of assessment criteria can be found in "Assessing Students: An Introduction for IVE Teachers" under Section 3: How are we assessing? Contact Teaching and Learning Centre if you would like a copy of this guide.

Some teachers find it beneficial to get their students to identify and agree on the criteria they will use to peer assess or self assess right at the start.

- ❖ Examples of peer-assessment criteria are attendance at meetings (and telephone/email contact), participation in information gathering/analysis, and supportiveness to the group.
- ❖ Examples of self-assessment criteria are ability to manage time, level of satisfaction with tasks, and perceived contributions relative to other group members.

Additional (or alternative) criteria may be relevant to your students. Students and the teacher keep a record of what they have agreed are fair criteria and they use these criteria at the end. Even if you do not choose to involve students in establishing criteria, you should give them some guidance (preferably in writing). Otherwise you may end up with disputes. Once students get to the mark-allocation stage of group work they start to be very concerned with fairness. They should be encouraged to recognise the need for evidence to support their claims. This is another reason why students should be encouraged to document their progress through meeting logs and interim reports. If they simply rely on their memories they may get into disagreements that are difficult to resolve at the end. This may sour a group that had gained real benefits from co-operative working.

## 3.2 Self assessment

Self assessment involves students making judgements about their own work. They can assess their own essays, reports, presentations, performances and projects. However, student self assessment is particularly valuable when they think about evidence that is very personal (reflective logs, diaries, action plans) where only the students know how well the evidence meets the assessment criteria. Self assessment can be particularly useful in group work where students are asked to reflect on their contribution to the successful (or partially successful) completion of a project or task. An element of self assessment is usually required in the peer assessment (see **Section 3.3**).

If you want students to self assess their work, you should warn them to be careful not to judge what they intended to achieve rather than what they actually did achieve. If self assessment is new to them, then students will need training in the skills required and guidance using these skills.

When a piece of group work is complete, you might like students to hand in some self-assessment comments also. This helps students develop their ability to judge their own work and make a useful 'closing' activity (and can even be done in tutorial time). Self assessment is a skill their future employers will value.

To see an example of a group self-assessment sheet, look at **BLM 8**. This sheet can be completed by students and submitted along with the finished group work task/project.

### **BLM 8 Group Work Self-assessment Sheet (see page 48)**

Source: Adapted from Brown, Rust and Gibbs (1994) p22.

A contrasting approach is given in **BLM 9**. This requires students to do an individual piece of reflective writing about group work based on a completed group project or group task. It forms part of the assessment requirements. Asking students to describe two 'critical incidents' that occurred in their group can be very revealing. These could relate to inter-personal situations or practical difficulties. They could also relate to breakthrough or high points that students felt really improved their work and gave them an emotional boost. The question about 'next time' can also be interesting as it requires students to look for ways of improving their group-work skills and practices.

The questions could also be used less formally in class as a 'closing' or debriefing activity.

### **BLM 9 Reflection Questions - Assessing Your Group and Assessment Criteria (see page 49)**

An alternative set of reflection questions are given in **BLM 10**. These are very open and can be used to give directed feedback to students.

### **BLM 10 Self-assessment Reflection Questions (see page 51)**

Source: Adapted from Race (2001) pp13-14

<http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/index.asp> Resources Database, Assessment, ASS009 A Briefing on Self, Peers and Group Assessment.

Link worked February 2004.

### 3.3 Peer assessment

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Peer assessment requires students to assess other students' work. Students' peer assessment can be used for nearly all types of student activity including reports, projects and posters. However it is more commonly used for evidence relating to presentations, performances and practical work. It is often used for student group work where it may be summative (taken into account at the end of group work, and contributing to the final grade students receive) or it may be formative (when students give and receive feedback from each other in order to help them improve).

Peer assessment can be difficult for students. They worry that classmates will be unhappy or angry with them if they say anything negative about them. They know that they will probably have to work with them again and may not want to upset them. Students usually want to support their friends and pay them compliments. As a teacher, you have to remind them that an important outcome of working together is getting to know your own strengths and weaknesses. Their fellow group members are commenting on what they observed and what the person did (their work quality/contribution/effort).

Peer assessment may be used purely for developmental purposes. It may also contribute some of the marks in formally assessed group-work activities. In this situation it is especially important that students understand how to peer assess and why peer assessment is being used. Some students will welcome it as a way of recognising and rewarding individual effort and achievement. Others will try to subvert it in order to get additional marks for themselves (especially if they think it will impact on their final grade). Unless students are very mature and/or experienced at peer assessment, the general advice is not to allow peer assessment to raise/lower a student's final grade by more than 10% - 15%. The majority of the responsibility for grading group work still lies with you, as their teacher.

If you allow students to use peer assessment, you need to be confident that the group members are in agreement with the final allocation and that it has been reached fairly. You may want student groups to produce written (signed) evidence. In all cases it might be worth setting a ground rule that if groups cannot agree then you have a process in place to resolve the issue (which might be a viva/oral quiz or some other method).

## Group-moderated marks

If you wish each group member to get a different mark you will have to decide on a mechanism. Some examples are:

### Share-out moderated group mark

Take the mark you have given the group, multiply it by the number of students in the group, and leave them to share out that total among themselves. They will need appropriate assessment criteria to enable them to do this fairly.

For example, a group of five students with a group project mark of 55 might share out the marks ( $5 \times 55 = 275$ ) as follows; 62, 60, 54, 54, 45.

Some groups may decide to agree to all having the same mark. If you want to avoid this, then you will have to impose some ground rules, for example:

- ❖ No two members can have identical marks, or
- ❖ Not more than two members can have identical marks

If you wish to avoid a wide range of the final marks, then put a band limit for individual marks (for example, +/- 10% or +/- 15%).

### Add marks for contribution (group mark + individual mark)

Group members are responsible for allocating some of the total marks to each individual. They will need appropriate assessment criteria to enable them to do this fairly.

For example, a group mark might be 80% with the remaining 20% being peer assessed. Each student gives the others in the group marks out of 20 using pre-set criteria. The marks for each student are totalled and averaged. The mark is added to the group mark to get the individual's total. So if the group project mark is 55, then this counts for 80% (44 marks). If a student is given 12, 15, 14, 15 by her peers the average is 14. Her final grade is  $44+14=54$ .

Students may conspire to get a good mark by giving full marks to each other. If you wish to avoid this, then you will have to impose some ground rules, for example:

- ❖ Marks must be based on the assessment criteria
- ❖ Marks must be justified by the presentation of evidence

### Add further tasks

Group members are awarded equal marks. Each individual group member then completes an additional task (written or oral) and the two marks are combined. Care must be taken that the additional tasks require similar effort (if they are all different).

For example, if the group mark (60) contributes 75%, and a student submits an individual piece of work that is graded 48 (contributing 25%), the total is  $45+12=57$ .



If you wish to use peer assessment, you will need to produce assessment criteria. Some teachers involve students in producing assessment criteria at the start of the group project or task.

Some examples of peer-assessment sheets are given for you to read and reflect upon. **BLM 11** requires students to assess their group members', and their own contribution to the work of the group in five areas: organisation and management, supportiveness to the group, ideas and suggestions, collection of information, production of final report/presentation. After completing the assessment sheet (individually) the sheets are passed to the teacher who will use them to weight the overall mark given in the project.

### **BLM 11 Group Project Members' Assessment Sheet** (see page 52)

Source: Adapted from Centre for Careers and Academic Practice. Teaching and Learning Resources, Liverpool

**BLM 12** requires students to think about their group members' contribution to a range of tasks: analysis of data/literature, writing of the report, routine work, attendance at meetings, preparation of materials for oral presentation, overall contribution. There is also space for other comments. This is to be completed by students individually.

### **BLM 12 Peer-assessment Sheet** (see page 53)

Source: Adapted from Bulman, T

Students can also complete **BLM 13** as a group. This third peer-assessment sheet (Peer Assessment of Team Skills) uses a separate sheet for each team member. It then requires some mathematical manipulation to ensure individual marks average the same as a team mark given by the teacher. This means that students cannot all be 'above average' or 'well above average'.

### **BLM 13 Peer Assessment of Team Skills** (see page 55)

Source: Adapted from Gibbs (1995) p19.

## X Y Zee reviews his approach to assessing students in groups

### Week 15

I have finally got all the group work marked. What a job! I do feel that asking students to do poster presentations has been quite successful. At the start they were apprehensive as this was new to them. Some groups also thought it would be an easy option and didn't realise how much work would be needed. Some groups had technical difficulties producing the posters on the computer, despite my repeated verbal reassurances that they could stick items on manually. Next year I need to either write this part of the briefing more clearly or get a computer technician to help them. I will discuss this with the Course Leader. I will also try to find more online resources that they can use.

I do feel that the peer assessment has been less successful. Some student groups agreed to all having the same grade, even though it appeared from the meeting logs that some did more work than others. One group also had a dominant student who put pressure on the others to bump up her grade. This was difficult (and time-consuming) to resolve. I will review the peer-assessment criteria we used before next year, and will make some changes. If I can squeeze in some more tutorial time next year, I will try an additional 'practice' session on peer review. I need to make a note in my diary to remember to look for one in a quieter week after the exam boards.



### Think about ...

1. Would you want to see groups twice during an eight-week project?
2. Do you agree that Zee should see some groups weekly? How else could he monitor group progress?
3. Have you ever had groups of students who experienced serious inter-personal conflict? Did you help them resolve it successfully?

### 3.4 Checklist for assessing students in groups

Next time you have to assess students in groups, consider doing the following ...

	Checkbox
❖ Decide what formative assessments students would benefit from and schedule them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ Decide whether all group members should get the same mark, or whether each group member should get a different mark.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ If you want to give individual marks for group tasks, think about what method is appropriate. Use a single product, a group product plus an individual product, or a product that can be sub-divided fairly.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ Make an early decision about whether self assessment and/or peer assessment will form part of the assessment package. Evaluate students' prior experience with these and give them appropriate training and practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ If you wish students to peer assess, think about how much this will contribute to the overall assessment package and what method will be used.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ Check that students know what the assessment criteria are and understand them at the start. Review them again towards the end of the group-work project or activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
❖ Evaluate the whole experience as you go, and after the activity is completed. Identify what worked and what needed improvement. There is always next time!	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 3.5 Useful websites

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The Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) has produced an excellent series of resources to disseminate good practices. Have a look at the assessment briefings by following the links on:

<http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/index.asp?id=17219>

The briefing on Self, Peer and Group Assessment (ASS009) is particularly useful.

A short overview about assessing students' work is available from the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development at Oxford Brookes University. The whole of Section 2 Assessing student work - is useful, but have a look at 2.5 Using self and peer assessment, and 2.6 Assessing group work. You might also benefit from reading 2.7 Helping students to prepare for assessment.

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/firstwords/fwconts.html>

This site contains a really good overview of using journals and diaries with students.

<http://www.ucd.ie/~teaching/good/lea7.htm>

"Deliberations" is a comprehensive site that contains materials and links to a wide variety of teaching and learning topics. To access these, visit:

<http://www.lgu.ac.uk/deliberations>

Choose "assessment" from the drop-down menu headed "Generic Learning and Teaching Resources and Issues" and follow links that interest you.

All links worked February 2004.

## References, Future Reading and Resources

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- Greenan K, Humphreys P and McIlveen H (1997) Developing transferable personal skills: part of the graduate toolkit. *Education and Training*. Vol.39, No.2, pp.71-78.
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- Margerison C and McCann D (1985) *How to Lead a Winning Team*. MCB University Press.
- Wood J, Wallace J, Zeffane R M, Schermerhorn J R, Hunt J G and Osbourne R N (1998) *Organisational Behaviour: An Asia-Pacific Perspective*. John Wiley & Sons. (Available in the MDC library).



## *We agree to ...*



- ✎ Arrive on time for group meetings and stay until the end of the meeting.
- ✎ Turn up for meetings (and telephone in advance if we can't because of something unavoidable like an illness).
- ✎ Share out tasks fairly (and if we agree to do a task we also agree to a deadline).
- ✎ All contribute (in both discussions and decisions) - we should value everybody's contributions.
- ✎ Ask other members of the team for help if we see a problem.
- ✎ All comment on what we see happening in the team.
- ✎ Offer a solution if we make a complaint.
- ✎ Make decisions fairly - if we can't agree then we take a vote.
- ✎ Rotate the roles of note-taker and team-leader around the group so that responsibilities and leadership are shared.
- ✎ Keep a project log (meeting log).
- ✎ Have fun and work hard!

Source: Adapted from Brief Guide ... Working in teams <http://www.vtc.edu.hk/tlc1/briefguide/teams/build.shtml>

### **Your task: Developing ground rules for your own group**

- ❖ Read the list of ground rules.
- ❖ Discuss the ground rules and change any you don't feel comfortable with.
- ❖ Produce your own ground rules and make sure that every group member has a copy.
- ❖ Refer to your ground rules from time to time, and especially if you are having any group problems.

Project log		
Project title:		Date:
What needs doing?	How long will it take?	Who will do it?

Page:

### The purpose of a project log:

To help you project plan; share the workload fairly; keep a record of who does what.





### Your task:




Creating a template page for a project log

Using the project log in your group work

- ❖ Either on a sheet of paper, or on the computer, draw up a grid similar to the sample above.
- ❖ Start with a simple overview of your project. Decide what needs doing, how long it will take and who will do what. This list may be quite long.
- ❖ Then divide large jobs into smaller parts. Try to be as specific as possible - instead of writing "do background reading" list what this might involve, for example, "define the following terms: ...", "do an online search using the following key words ...", "find and photocopy examples of similar studies/experiments", "produce outline notes of the methodology we will use".
- ❖ Where possible focus on the outcome of a task (the explanation to your group members of what you have found out, a written list of definitions, a table comparing the information you have gathered).
- ❖ You may also like to keep an individual log of what you have done and how long it took you if you are worried that some might do more work than others.
- ❖ Add to the list as the project progresses.



Meeting log	
Project:	Page:
Date of meeting:	
Members present:	
Work completed:	
Problem areas:	
Agreed action for next meeting:	Group member responsible:
	
	
	
	

Category of behaviours	Features
<p>Maintenance-oriented behaviours</p> 	<p>These assure individual comfort, set norms, help individuals build relationships, and support the group by making participation pleasurable.</p> <p>For example, some students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep the peace - harmonise</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gate-keep - suggest and encourage taking turns</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be encouraging and supportive</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish acceptable behaviour</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relieve tension - use humour</li> </ul> <p>Result: The group is friendly!</p>
<p>Self-oriented behaviours</p> 	<p>These disrupt the group and interfere with the successful completion of the activity. They make participation difficult and set a negative emotional tone that makes things unpleasant and the group ineffective.</p> <p>For example, some students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Resist authority and stonewall</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Withdraw from the group (be physically absent or use prolonged silence)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pair up in private relationships</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Put others down</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gripe (verbal complaining)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use non-verbal moping or pouting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Get off the subject, dominate or stick to their own agenda</li> </ul> <p>Result: Group members distrust each other and can't concentrate on the task. Some members use their energy in petty conflicts, others try to improve communication rather than trying to learn or work.</p>
<p>Task-oriented behaviours</p> 	<p>These support the successful completion of the work of the entire group.</p> <p>For example, students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set goals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Divide up tasks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask for information or opinions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Give information or opinions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clarify and/or elaborate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Test for consensus</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Summarise</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Monitor and evaluate group progress</li> </ul> <p>Result: The group gets things done.</p>

### Your task: Trying to understand behaviours in group work

- ❖ Read through the three categories of behaviours.
- ❖ Discuss with your own group members what they mean. (For example, can you give some examples of each of the behaviours? Can a group be successful with all members showing only task-oriented behaviours? How could your group deal with self-oriented behaviours?)

**Your task:**

It's time to evaluate a meeting! Think about how effective your behaviours and roles were.

- ❖ Read the fourteen statements carefully.
- ❖ For each statement decide (after group discussion) how your group has performed. Be honest!
- ❖ Look at your self assessment. What have you done well? What needs to be improved?

Statements for evaluating a group meeting				
Statement	1	2	3	4
1. We have agreed on and understood the specific goals for the group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. We have agreed on and understood the ground rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. We have responded to the feelings or moods expressed by members of our group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. We have listened to and responded to group members' ideas and comments and expressed recognition of contributions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. We have all been involved - we have all participated in the meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The atmosphere of the group has been friendly and open - we have encouraged each other to express criticisms and/or ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Our group leader has encouraged discussion by group members before presenting his/her own ideas to the group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. One of our members has synthesised related ideas and summarised concepts that we have been discussing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Our group leader has checked that we have all reached agreement about a point or are ready to move on to something else.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. We have confronted members who showed self-oriented behaviours (complained, argued, went off the point, would not join in).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. We have been able to discuss areas of difference between members without the disagreement becoming destructive to the group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. We have not allowed one person to dominate the group or misrepresent what we wanted to do or say.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. We have evaluated our progress towards our goals during, and at the close of the session.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. At the end of the session we have decided on our specific tasks and work to be done for the next time we meet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1 = yes, definitely! 😊😊	2 = to some extent 😊	3 = not really 😊	4 = not at all 😞😞
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Source: Adapted from Jacques (1991) p179.

**Don't worry** - this is a self-assessment activity. Next time you have a group meeting, why not try to make it more effective and do **all** of the things listed above?

### Your task:

It's time to evaluate your group! Think about how effective your behaviours and roles are.

- ❖ Read the eleven statements carefully.
- ❖ For each statement decide (after group discussion) how your group has performed. Be honest! Check the box  that best matches your view.

Statement
Allocating everyone specific jobs, tasks or responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> What we still need to work at <input type="checkbox"/> What we've managed to do quite well
Sorting out a schedule of work or deadlines to aim at <input type="checkbox"/> What we still need to work at <input type="checkbox"/> What we've managed to do quite well
Sorting out what standards we will try to reach <input type="checkbox"/> What we still need to work at <input type="checkbox"/> What we've managed to do quite well
Making sure everyone has a turn at speaking <input type="checkbox"/> What we still need to work at <input type="checkbox"/> What we've managed to do quite well
Making sure everyone is listened to <input type="checkbox"/> What we still need to work at <input type="checkbox"/> What we've managed to do quite well
Making sure everyone does his/her fair share of the work <input type="checkbox"/> What we still need to work at <input type="checkbox"/> What we've managed to do quite well
Monitoring our progress as a group <input type="checkbox"/> What we still need to work at <input type="checkbox"/> What we've managed to do quite well
Helping when someone has difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> What we still need to work at <input type="checkbox"/> What we've managed to do quite well
Consulting the teacher when we cannot sort something out for ourselves <input type="checkbox"/> What we still need to work at <input type="checkbox"/> What we've managed to do quite well
Keeping to the deadlines we have set for one another <input type="checkbox"/> What we still need to work at <input type="checkbox"/> What we've managed to do quite well
Checking our work is up to standard <input type="checkbox"/> What we still need to work at <input type="checkbox"/> What we've managed to do quite well

Now look at your self assessment. What have you done quite well? What do you still need to work at?

Student/Group:	Date:
Week no.:	Duration:
Date of next meeting:	Next meeting, week no.:
<b>1. Purpose of our meeting</b>  /	
<b>2. Focus of our meeting</b>  /	
<b>3. Issues arising during the meeting</b>  /	
<b>4. Action agreed by the students</b>	
<b>5. Action agreed by the teacher</b>	
Source: Adapted from Day, Grant and Hounsell (1998) <a href="http://www.tla.ed.ac.uk/ryt.html">http://www.tla.ed.ac.uk/ryt.html</a>	

Course/Module:		Date:
Group project/task:		
Group Members:		
	The <b>strengths</b> of this piece of work are ...	
	The <b>weaknesses</b> of this piece of work are ...	
	This work could be <b>improved</b> by ...	
	We think this work deserves a ___ grade!	
	To move the grade <b>up a level</b> , we would have to ...	
	Next time we have a group project we will <b>pay more attention</b> to ...	
	Teacher, we would like your <b>comments</b> on ...	

### Instructions

This piece of reflective writing is part of your assessment requirements. It will contribute 10% of your total grade for this module.

Write a maximum of 400 words in answer to the following questions:

1. How did your team form? What roles did individuals take, and why?
2. What were the working methods agreed on, and why? Did your way of working change?
3. Describe two 'critical incidents' that occurred in your group. What was the significance of these incidents?
4. If you were to tackle another task in the same group, how would you behave differently, and why?

You should submit this to [person and place] on, or before [day and/or time].

Please turn over to read your assessment criteria. If you have any questions, please raise them in a tutorial, or contact me [contact details].

**Reflection questions - assessing your group**  
**Assessment criteria**

<b>Area to be assessed</b>	<b>Distinction</b>	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Fail</b>
Coverage of the questions asked/tasks set	Excellent coverage of the questions asked/tasks set	Good attempt to address the questions asked/tasks set	Some attempt to address the questions asked/tasks set	Failure to address the questions asked/tasks set
Understanding of group behaviours	Insightful understanding of group behaviours and the impact of personal behaviour on the progress of the group task and the feelings of group members.	Adequate understanding of group behaviours and the impact of personal behaviour on the progress of the group task and the feelings of group members.	Limited understanding of group behaviours and the impact of personal behaviour on the progress of the group task and the feelings of group members.	No evidence of understanding of group behaviours.
Understanding of group roles	Excellent understanding of group roles and how they changed over time.	Reasonable understanding of group roles and how they changed over time.	Limited understanding of group roles and how they changed over time.	No evidence of understanding group roles.
Written style	Excellent clarity of expression. Consistent and accurate use of grammar and spelling with good writing style.	Thoughts and opinions are clearly expressed. Grammar and spelling are largely accurate.	Meaning is apparent, but the grammar and spelling are poor.	Meaning unclear. Language, spelling and grammar poor.
Overall, level of personal insight	Overall, evidence of extremely high personal insight or awareness of personal change as a result of having worked in a group.	Overall, evidence of a high degree of personal insight or awareness of personal change as a result of having worked in a group.	Overall, some evidence of personal insight or awareness of personal change as a result of having worked in a group.	Overall, no evidence of personal insight or awareness of personal change as a result of having worked in a group.



### The purpose of this activity:

To get the most out of an assignment, it is important to review it. Learning to be critical of your own work, to see the good parts and what needs improving is a valuable skill.

### Your task:

Write brief answers to the questions below. Be honest!

1. What do you think is a **fair score** or **grade** for the work you have completed?
2. What was the thing that you think you did **best** in this assignment?
3. What was the thing that you think you did **least well** in this assignment?
4. What did you find to be the **hardest** part of this assignment?
5. What was the **most important** thing you **learned** in doing this assignment?

Source: Adapted from Race (2001) pp13-14 <http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/index.asp> Resources Database, Assessment, ASS009 A Briefing on Self, Peer and Group Assessment

Project title:	Date:
Name:	Group:
Names of other group members:	
1.	2.
3.	4.

**ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORK OF THE GROUP**

Criteria	Person1	Person2	Person3	Person4	Self 5	Max Points
Organisation and management						10
Supportiveness to the group						10
Ideas and suggestions						10
Collection of information						10
Production of final report /presentation						10
Total						50

Assess each member of the group, including yourself, on each of the above criteria, allocating between 0 to 3 points to each person for each criterion, up to a maximum of 10 points in total for each criterion.

Your assessments will be used to weight the overall mark given to the project, in order to derive individual marks for each student. The weighting will be able to affect any student's individual mark within a range of minus 10 to plus 10 of the mark given for the project.

Source: Adapted from Centre for Careers and Academic Practice. Teaching and Learning Resources, Liverpool

Assessment of others is an important skill. Please take the time to complete this peer-assessment sheet. Try to be objective.

For each member of the group (except yourself), award a mark from 1 to 5 for your group members' level of participation in the tasks identified on the form.

Please use the following scale:

1. **Did not contribute** even though it was expected
2. **Willing** but not very successful
3. **Average**: did the basic work adequately, but made no special effort
4. Above average: willing, able, successful, made a special effort
5. **Outstanding**: made extra effort and produced high quality work which was critical to the success of this part of the work
- X. **Was not asked to contribute** to this part of the group work

Consider both the quality of your classmate's work and how cooperative he/she was. For example:

Did this person

- ❖ attend all scheduled meetings?
- ❖ meet all deadlines?
- ❖ accept constructive criticism and act on it?
- ❖ contribute, share ideas and research materials?
- ❖ do a fair share of the routine work (photocopying, typing, proof-reading, keeping minutes of the meetings, etc.)?
- ❖ build and maintain a good relationship with the other group members?


# Peer-assessment Sheet


Course/Module:		Date:				
Assignment:						
Group members' names:						
A.		B.				
C.		D.				
E.						
Task	A	B	C	D	E	
Research						
Analysis of data/literature						
Writing of the report						
Routine work (photocopying, taking minutes, checking details)						
Attendance at meetings (and telephone/email contact)						
Preparation of materials for oral presentation						
Participation in oral presentation						
Overall contribution						
Any other comments						
Source: Adapted from Bulman, T						

**Instructions**

For each team member in turn, discuss his/her relative contribution to the effective functioning of the team. You must decide whether the contribution was average, above average or below average.

You will need:

 A separate sheet for each group member

 A pencil

Procedure:

- ❖ Think about one person at a time
- ❖ Circle the contribution your group agrees is most appropriate
- ❖ Calculate the total (For example, if you get +1, -2, -1, 0, +2, -1, -1, 0, the total is -2). This is your moderation mark.
- ❖ Fill in the teacher's mark, your moderation mark and calculate your individual mark. For example:

Teacher's mark	58%
Moderation mark	-2%
Individual mark	56%

Note: You cannot **all** contribute above average marks.  
If you are unsure what to do, ask your teacher!

## Peer assessment of team-skills sheet

Course/Module:		Date:			
Assignment:		Teacher:			
EXTENT OF INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION TO EACH COMPONENT					
Aspect of team functioning	Well below average	Below average	Average	Above average	Well above average
Forming good team cohesion	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Leadership, managing meetings	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Planning and allocating tasks	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Generating ideas and solutions	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Tackling group social problems	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Organising individuals to do jobs	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Helping group members finish jobs	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Willingly take on unpopular jobs	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
	<b>Teacher's mark</b>				
	<b>Moderation mark</b>				
	<b>Individual mark</b>				
Group members' names:				Signatures:	
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
Source: Adapted from Gibbs (1995) p19.					