The Value of Academic Group Work: Faculty and Student Perceptions

LaBeouf, Griffith, & Schultz. (2014).
Group Work

Introduction
Literature
Hypothesis
Treatment of Data
Results
Conclusions/Recommendations
Introduction

Su (2007) called for more studies

Faculty n=330, Students n=1,589
Literature on Group Work

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

Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing study

- Ideas come from working alone (Dunnette et al., 1963)
- Cultures make difference (Popv et al., 2012)
- Effective in Small groups (Van Hattum, 2014)
- Students don’t see value (Smith et al., 2010)
Hypotheses

$H_{a_1}$ Faculty positive towards group work

$H_{a_2}$ Students are negative towards group work

$H_{a_3}$ Faculty and students will have different perceptions
Method/Treatment of Data

Survey distributed via e-mail link
  ◦ 2,600 faculty – 12% return – n=330
  ◦ 10,659 students – 14% return – n=1,589

Likert scale – collapsed categories
  ◦ SA and A \quad SD, D, and neutral

Quan - \( \alpha = .05 \quad \chi^2 \)

Qual – NVivo 10 - trends in open comments
Quantitative Findings

Faculty – Group work (n=330)

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

Students – Group work (n=1,589)

- Has academic value (50%, p=.92)
- Prepares students for future positions (51%, p=.257)
- Develops individual skills (working with groups) (52%, p=.092)
- One grade for all (59%, p=.000*)
- Disagreed that they would take a course because it had group work (66% p=.000*)
Table 4: Summary of Questions Where Faculty and Student Perceptions Differed. (Chi Square, α=.05).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th></th>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Chi Sq.</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(F) Requiring group work has academic value. (S) Participating in group research work is a good learning experience</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>795</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>99.622</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group research work is a way to prepare for future positions in the work force</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>90.01</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work allows students to develop individual skills within the confines of group requirements</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>67.40</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One grade was given for all group members regardless of contribution.</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>85.61</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The group grade reflected group and individual contributions.</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24.12</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faculty  
(n=118 in open comment area)

(42) Student contribution to group grade  
  ◦ Difficult to assess, “social loafing”

(20) group work not beneficial

(19) Not good for online environments  
  ◦ Difficult to assess, time zone issues

(15) Prepares students for “real life”
Students (n=692 in open comment area)

(266) Students not contributing
  ◦ “Social loafing”

(152) Not effective in online environments

(147) Dislike group work

(135) Collaboration difficult
  ◦ Time zones and work schedules

(71) Suggestions for instructors
  ◦ Coaching
Conclusions

Perception of Business/Industry preference

Individual contributions – “social loafing”

Hard for instructors to assess contributions
  ◦ Have student peer assessment

Assign groups by time zone

ERAU non traditional students/structure

66% of students felt grading was fair
Recommendations

Study group work in online settings
Differences in graduate and undergraduate perceptions
Business and Engineering vs. social sciences/humanities
Impact of culture, gender and personality on group work performance/perceptions
Use Qualitative and Quantitative tools
Questions?

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