

**“But *I* Did All the Work”
Effective Group Work
and Its Assessment**

Institute for Learning and Teaching
Excellence

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What is Group Communication?

Engleberg and Wynn (2003): "the interaction of three or more interdependent people working toward a common goal."

Interaction:

Common goal:

Interdependent:

Five Benefits of Group Work

1. Students gain insight into group dynamics.
2. Group assessment allows the development of a more comprehensive assignment.
3. Group assignments develop the student's interpersonal skill.
4. Students are exposed to other points of view.
5. Students are prepared for the real world.

Source: Mello, J. A. "Improving Individual Member Accountability in Small Work Group Settings." *Journal of Management Education* 17 (1993): 253-259.

Keys to Successful Groups and Cooperative Learning

1. Instructor interaction

2. The importance of goals
 - a. Goal activation

 - b. Goal salience

 - c. Multiple goals

 - d. Goal alignment

 - e. Optimal challenge

Source: Wellington, Paul. "Multidisciplinary Student Teams Motivated by Industrial Experience." *Motivating Students*. Ed. Sally Brown, Steve Armstrong and Gail Thompson. London: Kogan Page, 1998.

3. A positive attitude

4. The "Strangers" factor

5. Student differences

Six Dimensions of Culture

- 1. Power distance: Extent of equity of status among members**
Recommended adaptations: Establish clear norms for member behavior. To what extent will members participate in decision making? How will specific tasks be assigned? How and by whom will members be evaluated? Who will serve as leader or leaders?
- 2. Uncertainty avoidance: Extent of comfort in uncertain situations**
Recommended adaptations: Provide clear instructions to the high uncertainty members while giving low-uncertainty members opportunities to function unaided.
- 3. Individualism - collectivism: Prefer to act independently or interdependently**
Recommended adaptations: Encourage collectivism, but make sure that individualistic members understand they are a part of a larger group that needs their input and participation to achieve shared goal.
- 4. Masculinity - femininity: Concern for self and success vs. focus on caring and sharing**
Recommended adaptations: Balance masculine and feminine values in order to achieve goals. Do not forgo action in order to achieve total cooperation and consensus.
- 5. Long-term - short-term: Expectations for and timing of rewards**
Recommended adaptations: Involve long-term oriented members in planning and skill-building while letting short-term oriented members pursue immediate and measurable objectives.
- 6. High - low context: Directness of communication in specific circumstances**
Recommended adaptations: Give high-context members time to review information and react; demonstrate the value of going beyond “just facts” to low-context members.

Source: Engleberg, Isa N. and Dianna R. Wynn. *Working in Groups: Communication Principles and Strategies*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 65-66.

Five Types of Personalities: Linking Culture and Conflict Management

- Avoiding: I would avoid discussing my differences with the group member.
- Obliging: I would give in to the wishes of the group member.
- Compromising: I would use give-and-take so that a compromise could be made.
- Dominating: I would be firm in pursuing my side of the issue.
- Integrating: I would exchange accurate information with the group to solve the problem together.

Griffin, Em. *A First Look at Communication Theory*. 5th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2003. 438-439.

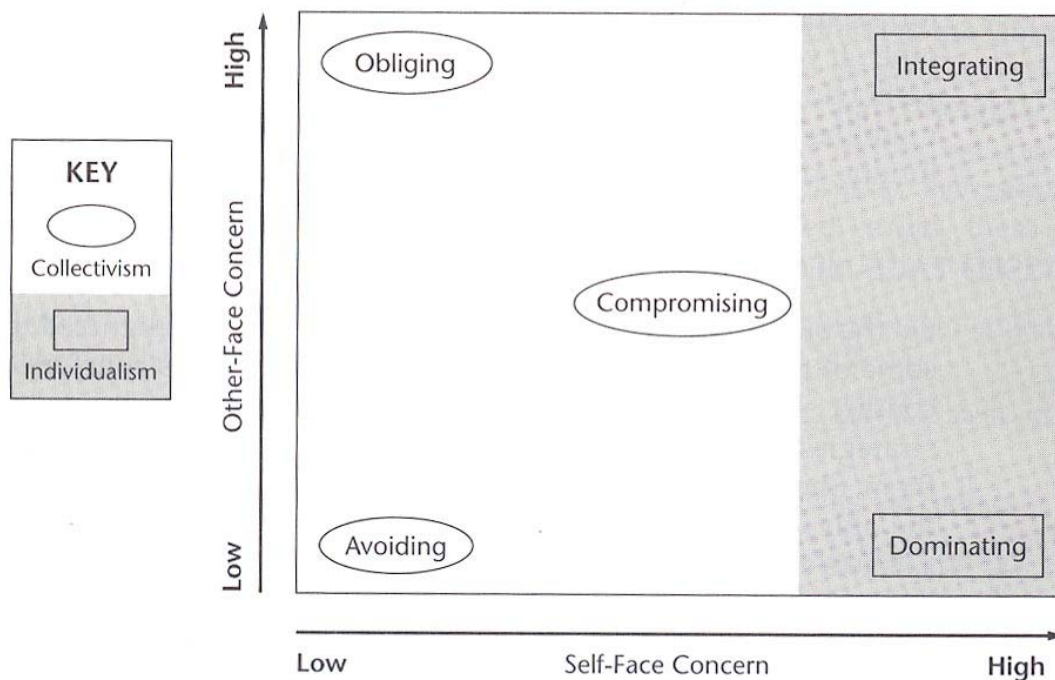


FIGURE 31-2 A Cultural Map of Five Conflict Management Styles

(Based on Ting-Toomey et al., "Culture, Face Maintenance, and Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict: A Study in Five Cultures.")

Using Oncourse in Group Work

Source: Help Section of Oncourse

Discussion Forums

Unlike chat rooms, which offer live, real-time conversations, discussion forums are online bulletin boards where class members can post messages, organized by topics or "threads". Instructors can grade discussion forum postings and have them posted directly to the Gradebook. Discussion forums can be made viewable by the general public, by class members, or to groups defined in the class roster. Forum postings are permanent; you can't delete or revise them, and you can search all the forums in a given course for a string of text. It is up to the individual instructor to specify any policies for appropriate use of discussion forums.

Threads

Discussion forum messages are organized in a structure that reflects the shape and structure of the discussion. You can see an expanded or a collapsed view of a discussion. If you choose to "Expand All", you will see all messages at once, arranged appropriately. For example, if you post a message and then I post a reply to it, my reply will appear under your message.

In a collapsed view, you can click the plus sign next to a message topic to see the replies to that message.

Attachments

You can upload a file to use as an attachment to any forum posting.

Notification

Instructors can set up their discussion forums so that Oncourse sends e-mail to authors notifying them of unread discussion postings.

Tips

- In many cases, you may need to set specific guidelines for participation. Make sure your class knows what kind of contributions are expected and required.
- If your class tends to lose focus and drift away from the forum topic, consider creating a special forum for casual, off-topic discussions.
- If you intend to grade Forum postings and to record those grades automatically in the Gradebook, you'll have to set up Gradebook assignments for them ahead of time.
- Some instructors use the Forum to offer feedback to students. If you don't want all your comments to be available to all students, you can set up forums for smaller groups.
- If you don't want other students to see your response, you can send your comments by using the grading feature. You will be prompted to choose an assignment and a gradebook, but you can send the comment without actually giving a grade.
- You can link directly to a discussion forum from a Schedule item.

Chat Rooms

Chat rooms allow instructors to create common places for live, real-time conversations on the Web. In Oncourse, these are particularly useful for group meetings, online "office hours", and guest "speakers". Instructors can designate that chat rooms be available to the entire class or just to groups defined in the class roster. Chat rooms can also be made available to the general public. It is up to the individual instructor to specify any policies for appropriate use of the course's chat rooms.

Archives

When you create a chat room, you can decide to archive the conversation. This is a good idea if you intend to monitor participation. If you don't archive the chat, then messages will disappear permanently once they expire.

Active chat time

Ordinarily, chat postings remain visible for five minutes and then expire. If five minutes is not long enough, you can set a longer active chat time, up to a maximum of 30 minutes.

Room utilities

Anyone who uses a chat room can "filter" out (i.e., hide) messages from particular people. You can also create a temporary "private room", only allowing access to the people you specify.

Tips

- If you would like to use the chat room for a presentation by a guest speaker who is not a class member, make sure you configure the room to be viewable by the general public. If you do this, the guest speaker can be anywhere in the world.
- In some cases you may need to set specific guidelines for using the chat room, including protocols for asking questions and offering responses.

Group Space

A group space is a folder where class members can upload files to share. Group spaces can either be available to the entire class, or restricted to groups defined in the class roster. It is up to the individual instructor to determine usage guidelines for any shared space.

Group spaces work similarly to drop boxes, but there are very few restrictions; anyone who has access to the space also has access to all the files in it. (By contrast, if you are a student using a drop box, only you and your instructor can see the files you put there.)

Size limits

By default, the file size limit for individual files in a group space is 1.5MB. Instructors can increase the file size to 50MB. For total space in a group space, the default size limit is 100MB; instructors can increase the limit to 500MB. If you need to allow even larger files, and there is enough space on the Server, the Oncourse administrator may be able to arrange additional increases for you.

Tip

- If you create group spaces for your class, make sure all the class members understand the difference between group spaces and drop boxes.

Creating Groups

Instructors can organize their class into groups such as discussion sessions. If you have redirected several courses into one combined course, the students from the redirected courses will automatically be divided into groups. If your class contains groups, you can easily provide communication specific to that group. For instance, you can send Course Mail to members of a group; you can also create chat rooms, discussion forums, or group spaces for a particular group or groups to use.

How can I organize my class into groups?

To create a group in [Oncourse](#), follow these steps:

1. Log into Oncourse and enter your course. For help, see the Knowledge Base document [In Oncourse, how do I log in, and what should I do if I'm having trouble logging in?](#)
2. At the top of the page, click **class**.
3. Select **Create/Edit Groups**.
4. Click the blue plus sign icon next to "New Group". This will display a window with a scrollable, selectable list of all the members of the class and a text box labeled "Group Name".
5. Enter a name for the group, and select the people you would like to designate as members of the group. To select multiple names in Windows, hold down the **Ctrl** key while selecting; in [Mac OS](#), hold down the [Cmd](#) key.
6. To activate, click **OK**.

Once you have created groups in you class you will be able to restrict course information to specific groups. Groups will also be reflected automatically in the Oncourse Mail address book.

Dealing with Conflict

The Four R Method:

- Reasons
- Reactions
- Results
- Resolution

Dealing with individual differences:

- Negotiation
- Mediation
- Arbitration

Five Methods for Assessment

1. Multiplication of Group Mark by Individual Weighting Factor
2. Distribution of Pool of Marks
3. Group Mark Plus or Minus Contribution Mark
4. Equally Shared Mark with Exceptional Teacher Intervention
5. Splitting of Group Tasks and Individual Tasks

Notes on Peer Review and Self-Assessment

Assessment Tools

Group Discussion Participant Evaluation Form

Source: Lucas, Stephan E. *Instructor's Manual to Accompany The Art of Public Speaking*. 8th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004. 382.

Person being evaluated

Your name

Group

For each item, circle the number the best reflects your evaluation of the participant's contribution to the group.

Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	
P	F	A	G	E	Appeared committed to the goals of the group
P	F	A	G	E	Participated frequently in group deliberations
P	F	A	G	E	Comments were clear, relevant, and helpful
P	F	A	G	E	Carried out individual assignments promptly
P	F	A	G	E	Assisted with procedural leadership functions
P	F	A	G	E	Assisted with task leadership functions
P	F	A	G	E	Assisted with maintenance leadership functions
P	F	A	G	E	Avoided interpersonal conflict with group members
P	F	A	G	E	Encouraged participation by other group members
P	F	A	G	E	Helped keep discussion on track
P	F	A	G	E	Overall contribution in comparison with other group members

Comments: (this space must be filled in)

Peer Group Assessment Form

Source: Jaques, David. *Learning in Groups*, 3rd ed. London: Kogan Page. 2000. 228.

Please assess your colleague by giving a mark of 1 - 5 (by checking the appropriate box) in each of the following categories. This form will be treated in strict confidence.

Name of colleague being assessed:

Total Score:

Regularly makes a useful contribution in group discussion	5	4	3	2	1	Finds it difficult to be a contributing group member
Can be relied on to carry out allocated duties accurately and without supervision	5	4	3	2	1	Needs more supervision than most in carrying out instructions assigned to him/her
Works amicably with others as a member of a team	5	4	3	2	1	Has difficulty in working with colleagues and is sometimes not accepted as a member of the team
Responds well to advice/instructions/criticism	5	4	3	2	1	Resents criticism and is reluctant to accept advice
Is consistently courteous and helpful to colleagues	5	4	3	2	1	Appears off-hand and casual in dealing with colleagues
Shows excellent ability to plan and complete own work	5	4	3	2	1	Has not yet learned to organize own work effectively
Is outstanding in ability to organize and supervise work of others	5	4	3	2	1	Is not able to organize and supervise work of others
Grasps essentials very quickly	5	4	3	2	1	Has difficulty in recognizing essentials
Successfully anticipates the requirements of new situations and takes appropriate action	5	4	3	2	1	Has difficulty in recognizing implications of new situations
Is good at solving problems	5	4	3	2	1	Has difficulty in suggesting solutions to problems

Comments:

Your name:

S336 Group Project Grade Form

Source: Michael Abernethy

Group Members _____

Content Quality (30 pts)

Total Points _____

Is the topic thoroughly covered?

- is the history of the subject revealed?
- are all sides of the issue covered?
- is language appropriate to the topic?

Are sources credible and relevant?

Are sources cited and cited effectively?

Is a variety of material utilized?

Topic Analysis (30 pts)

Total Points _____

Are rhetorical acts examined in terms of

- effectiveness?
- identification with intended audience?
- use of victimage or mortification?
- credibility/background of the speaker?
- relation to the subject?

Is there analysis of the social impact of the rhetorical acts?

Does a consistent theme between individual presentations exist?

Is there a clearly identifiable thesis supported by material presented?

Presentation Mechanics (40 pts)

Total Points _____

Do all group members participate equally?

Does the presentation have good “flow” or is it inconsistent in appearance?

Are speakers poised?

Does the presentation have good organization?

Are visual aids/videos/audios used to best effect?

Are transitions/connective used

- between speakers?
- within individual presentations?

Is effective vocal variety/rate employed?

Does the presentation have a clear beginning and ending?

Peer Review (25 pts)

Total Points _____

This grade will be based on survey forms group members will fill out regarding the effort and participation of one another. The total points assigned will be an average of all group members’ survey responses.

Individual Group Member _____

Final Grade _____

Participation Assessment Instrument

Source: Engleberg, Isa N. and Dianna R. Wynn. *Working in Groups: Communication Principles and Strategies*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 70-71.

Directions: Use the following items to evaluate the quantity and quality of participation by the individual members of your group. Write a summary assessment based on your responses.

	Excellent		Average		Poor
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Contribution to the group's task functions. (Provides or asks for information and opinions, initiates discussion, clarifies, summarizes, evaluates, energizes, etc.)					
2. Contribution to the group's maintenance functions. (Serves as encourager, harmonizer, compromiser, tension releaser, gatekeeper, standard monitor, observer, follower, etc.)					
3. Contribution to effective and efficient group process. (Avoids self-centered roles, follows an agenda, respects and adapts member traits and differences, etc.)					
4. Readiness to contribute. (Well prepared with ideas, opinions, and information)					
5. Willingness to contribute. (Level of commitment to group's goal; willingness to share, listen, adapt, exercise responsibility, etc.)					
6. Ability to contribute. (Communication skills and technical skills)					
7. Ability to deal with difficulties. (Disruptive members, hidden agendas, etc.)					
8. Overall effectiveness.					

Decision-Making Competencies

Source: Engleberg, Isa N. and Dianna R. Wynn. *Working in Groups: Communication Principles and Strategies*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 234.

Directions: This instrument represents a modified version of an assessment tool designed to evaluate the performance of individual group members who participate in task-oriented, decision-making discussions. There are five competencies related to accomplishing the group's task and three competencies dealing with conflict, climate, and interaction. Rate individuals on each item, as well as the group as a whole, in order to assess how well an observed group solves problems and makes important decisions.

	Superior	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1. Defines/analyzes problem. Appropriately defines and analyses the problem that confronts the group.			
2. Identifies criteria. Appropriately participates in the establishment of the group goals and identifies criteria for assessing the quality of the group outcome.			
3. Generates solutions. Appropriately identifies the solutions or alternatives identified by group members.			
4. Evaluates solutions. Appropriately evaluates the solutions or alternatives identified by group members.			
5. Maintains task focus. Appropriately helps the group stay on the task, issue, or agenda item the group is discussing.			
6. Manages conflict. Appropriately manages disagreements and conflict.			
7. Maintains climate. Appropriately provides supportive comments to other group members.			
8. Manages interaction. Appropriately manages interaction and invites others to participate.			

Team Motivation Inventory

Source: Engleberg, Isa N. and Dianna R. Wynn. *Working in Groups: Communication Principles and Strategies*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 290-291.

Directions: This instrument can be used to measure the motivation level of a group in which you are currently a member or have worked in the past. Complete the instrument on your own. Use the following scale to assign a number to each statement: (5) strongly agree (4) agree (3) neutral (2) disagree (1) strongly disagree

- _____ 1. I work very hard in my group.
- _____ 2. I work harder in this group than I do in most groups.
- _____ 3. Other members work very hard in this group.
- _____ 4. I am willing to spend extra time on group projects.
- _____ 5. I try to attend all group meetings.
- _____ 6. Other members regularly attend group meetings.
- _____ 7. I often lose track of time when I'm working in the group.
- _____ 8. Group members don't seem to mind working long hours on our project.
- _____ 9. When I am working with the group, I am focused on our work.
- _____ 10. I look forward to working with the members of my group.
- _____ 11. I enjoy working with group members.
- _____ 12. Group members enjoy working with each other.
- _____ 13. I am doing an excellent job in my group.
- _____ 14. I am doing better work in this group than I have in other groups.
- _____ 15. The other members are making excellent contributions to the group.
- _____ 16. I am willing to do whatever the group needs in order to achieve our goal.
- _____ 17. I trust the members of my group.
- _____ 18. The other group members are willing to take on extra work.
- _____ 19. I am proud of the work my group is doing.
- _____ 20. I understand the importance of our group's work.
- _____ 21. Everyone is committed to successfully achieving our goal.
- _____ 22. I am proud of the contributions I have made to the group.
- _____ 23. The group appreciates my work.
- _____ 24. I am proud to be a member of this group.
- _____ 25. The group really works well together.
- _____ Total

Scoring and Interpretation

Add your ratings for all of the statements. A score below 75 indicates a low level of group motivation. Scores between 76 and 99 represent a moderate level of motivation. Any score above 100 suggests the group is highly motivated. Compare your score to those of other members in your group. You may discover that you share similar feelings about your group and its tasks.

If the group is highly motivated, the group can proceed and expect positive results. Otherwise, the group should discuss why some members are more motivated than others. Is there disagreement about the goals or the group, the way the task is structured, or the expectations of members? Are some members doing most of the interesting work while others are relegated to routine assignments? Do some members feel left out or ignored?

If most group members lack motivation, the group may need to discuss its reason for being. Has the group been assigned a task but not given clear directions or a justification for doing the assignment? Is the task too difficult or too complex for the group to handle? Are there expectations unclear or unreasonable? Are some members making it difficult for others to participate?

Elements of Small Group Communication

Source: Engleberg, Isa N. and Dianna R. Wynn. *Working in Groups: Communication Principles and Strategies*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 23.

Group Size	Yes	No	Sometimes
1. Do group members communicate with each other directly?			
2. Does the group have enough people to achieve its goal?			
3. Can the group function effectively without forming subgroups?			
Interaction			
1. Can group members communicate with each other easily and frequently?			
2. Do members receive and respond to messages in a way that enhances communication?			
Common Goal			
1. Does the group have clear goal?			
2. Do members understand and support the group goal?			
Interdependence			
1. Do members feel responsible for the group's actions?			
2. Do members understand their individual and group responsibilities?			
3. Do members believe "we're all in this together"?			
Working			
1. Are members ready, willing, and able to participate as active group members?			
2. Do members give the time and energy needed to achieve the group's goal?			

Reflective Thinking Method Checklist

Source: Lucas, Stephen E. *Student Workbook: The Art of Public Speaking*. 8th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004. 60.

	Yes	No
1. Did the group clearly define the problems for discussion?		
2. Did the group phrase the question for discussion as a question of policy?		
3. Did the group phrase the question for discussion as clearly as possible?		
4. Did the group phrase the question for discussion so as to allow for a wide variety of answers?		
5. Did the group phrase the question for discussion in an unbiased manner?		
6. Did the group phrase the question for discussion as a single question?		
7. Did the group analyze the problem thoroughly before attempting to map out solutions?		
8. Did the group establish criteria for an ideal solution to the problem before discussing specific solutions?		
9. Did the group brainstorm to generate a wide variety of potential solutions to the problem?		
10. Did the group evaluate each potential solution in light of the criteria for an ideal solution?		
11. Did the group make a determined effort to reach consensus with regard to the best solution?		
12. Did the group achieve consensus?		

Group Discussion Self-Assessment

Source: Lucas, Stephen E. *Student Workbook: The Art of Public Speaking*. 8th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004. 61.

Your task is to reach a full, objective assessment of the major strengths and weakness of your small group and of your performance in the group. Write a thoughtful, objective evaluation in full-sentence and paragraph form with an introduction and a conclusion.

Use the following questions to guide your self-assessment, though you do not need to answer each question individually in your paper. Be specific and concrete in your comments.

Leadership

- Did your group have a designated leader?
- If you did not have a designated leader, what kind of leadership developed in the group?
- Which members were most effective in meeting the group's procedural needs?
- Which members were most effective in meeting the group's task needs?
- Which members were most effective in meeting the group's maintenance needs?

Responsibilities of Group Members

- How fully did members commit themselves to the goals of the group?
- How well did members carry out their individual assignments?
- Did the group avoid interpersonal conflict by keeping disagreement at the task level?
- Did vocal members encourage full participation by other members in the group?
- Did group members work to keep discussion on track?

Use the Reflective-Thinking Method

- Did the group define the question for discussion?
- Did the group analyze the problem thoroughly before attempting to map out solutions?
- Did the group establish criteria for an ideal solution?
- Did the group brainstorm to generate a wide variety of potential solutions?
- Did the group evaluate each potential solution in light of the criteria for an ideal solution?
- Did the group make a determined effort to reach consensus about the best solution?
- Did the group achieve consensus? Why or why not?

Overall Evaluation

- Are you satisfied with the work of the group and with your role in the group?
- If the group were to start its project over again, what changes would you recommend help the group work more effectively? Be specific.