UNC CENTER FOR FACULTY EXCELLENCE

Faculty Showcase on Teaching
Strategies for Effective Group Activities
November 2, 2018

Grouping Best Practices: Nikki G. Lobczowski, M.Ed., UNC School of Education

Research on Grouping

Factors that influence the success of a group include:

1. Size: As number increases, performance, satisfaction, participation, and cooperation suffer
2. Individual Ability: Narrow range may be best
3. Gender: Balance gender for optimal grouping
4. Race/Ethnicity: trade-offs between increased diversity of viewpoints and more emotional conflict

Recommendations

1. Match grouping technique to your instructional purpose
2. Need to know your students to group purposefully
3. Group by deep-level factors rather than demographics
4. When in doubt, randomize!
5.

References

Lei, S. A., Kuestermeyer, B. N., & Westmeyer, K. A. (2010). Group composition affecting student interaction and achievement: instructors' perspectives. Journal of instructional psychology, 37(4), 317.

Mannix, E., & Neale, M. A. (2005). What differences make a difference? The promise and reality of diverse teams in organizations. Psychological science in the public interest, 6(2), 31-55.

Miyake, N., & Kirschner, P. A. (2014). The social and interactive dimensions of collaborative learning. In R. K. Sawyer (Ed.), The Cambridge Handbook of the Learning Sciences (2 ed., pp. 418-438). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Murphy, P. K., Greene, J. A., Firetto, C. M., Li, M., Lobczowski, N. G., Duke, R. F., ... & Croninger, R. M. (2017). Exploring the influence of homogeneous versus heterogeneous grouping on students' text-based discussions and comprehension. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 51, 336-355.

Wilkinson, I. A., & Fung, I. Y. (2002). Small-group composition and peer effects. International Journal of Educational Research, 37(5), 425-447.

Building Strong Teams for Real-World Work: Dr. Anna Krome-Lukens, Public Policy

References

Turning Student Groups into Effective Teams:
http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/Papers/Oakley-paper(JSCL).pdf

Team-Based Learning: Dr. George Pink, Department of Health Policy and Management, Gillings School of Global Public Health

4 S's of Team Assignments

1. Significant: Problem should be relevant to students
2. Same problem: Students learn from how other teams approach the task
3. Specific Choice: Ask students to invest and commit to a specific action
4. Simultaneously Report: Take advantage of heightened attention and interest

Activities

1. Before Class: Students read a case study, draft responses, submit on Sakai
2. In Class: Review individuals' draft responses, debate differences, decide on a team response, submit solution on Sakai, defend their recommendations
3. After Class: Students receive detailed feedback from the instructor and TA

References

http://www.teambasedlearning.org/

Evaluating Small Group Learning: Dr. Emily Moorefield, Department of Cell Biology and Physiology

Set Learning Objectives

1. Teamwork and cooperation
2. Mastery of specific content

Track Process

1. In-class discussion
2. Course evaluations
    a. Collect student feedback on instructional methods and group facilitators
3. Peer evaluations
    a. Use rubrics for constructive feedback on teamwork

Final Product: Exam

1. Categorize exam questions
    a. Not covered in small group exercise
    b. Covered in small group exercise
    c. Compare performance between categories

References

Kulasegaram, Kulamakan, & Rangachar, Patangi K. (2018). Beyond "formative": assessments to enrich student learning. Advances in Physiology Education, 42(1), 5-14. https://www.physiology.org/doi/full/10.1152/advan.00122.2017

Hodges, Linda C. (2017). Ten Research-Based Steps for Effective Group Work. IDEA Paper #65 https://www.ideaedu.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/IDEA%20Papers/IDEA%20Papers/PaperIDEA_65.pdf