



Where To Now? Searching For the Ideal Group Assessment Method

Dale Parsons
Otago Polytechnic
Dunedin, New Zealand
dale@tekotago.ac.nz

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ABSTRACT

As a piece of action research Lecturers in the BIT programme at Otago Polytechnic have been trialling and refining various approaches to assessing an individual's contribution to group work. This poster presents the methods and highlights the problems we have encountered.

1. Background

A useful survey of group assessment methods can be found in Lejk, Wyvill and Farrow 1996. Our work is a modification of the work done by Lejk and Wyvill, 2001.

2. Methods

In the category based approach the major problems were manageability of the data and student marker consistency. The categories chosen were sub-tasks and it was not always fair to mark each student on every task because groups split their workloads in different ways. The categories were not all equally important but were weighted as such. Students gave only a narrow range of marks.

We then moved to a more holistic method of allocating marks. Students reported disliking allocating negative marks to their peers and they did not give a large range of marks. Individual students were asked to reassess their marks when they were not in agreement with other group members.

To get around the problem of negative marks a '60 sum' method was used. Student feedback on this method was that they felt that group size would effect the range of marks allocated and they wanted criteria to assist them in allocating their marks.

An improvement on the last method is a technique which we have called 'Flexi-sum'. Here 20 is the base mark, regardless of how many students are in the group. Students are given a table of categories that they can use to produce a final mark for each group member. The bulk of the categories are about the process of working in a group. The trial is on-going.

REFERENCES

- Lejk, M., Wyvill, M., Farrow, S. (1996).** A Survey of Methods of Deriving Individual Grades from Group Assessments. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 21(3), pp. 267-280.
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