
Division of teamwork among university students: *the impact of an advanced peer evaluation tool based on Belbin team roles*

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Keywords

Teamwork, peer evaluation, University students, Belbin team roles

Abstract

Active participation in teamwork among university students is an important part of their learning process; particularly nowadays, when multiple evaluation criteria are being used to an increasing extent, and in-term, or final projects are a large part of the final grade. Experience shows, however, that the workload tends to be unequally divided among team members, resulting in conflicts within teams, unfair lower grades for active students and excessively high grades for the so-called "free riders". It is, therefore, important to find an approach to maximize the effectiveness of the teams, compensate those students who contribute the most to the teamwork with fair grades, and prevent too high grading for the free riders. This is, in many respects, a challenging task, involving substantial complications. For this purpose an advanced peer-evaluation tool was developed and tested in 14 courses at undergraduate and graduate levels at the University of Iceland, Faculty of Business Administration, and a summer school comprising 3 courses at Bifröst School of Business. The peer-evaluation was founded on Belbin's team roles, adapted to the specific application. The 4th version of the peer evaluation is based on eight constructs from the Belbin test and an overall work-load contribution. To facilitate the answering procedure, an on-line survey application was used with a drop-down list of team names and team members. Each team member had to evaluate all the other team members with all the factors, had the opportunity to write comments for each team member as well as the overall team work, and, finally, they had to divide the work-load among all team members except him-/herself. A limit was imposed, however, to minimize the potential effect of bulleting. The results were analyzed using advanced features of Microsoft Excel. The application of this approach resulted in increased fairness of the grading for the teamwork, and had a positive impact the division of work among team members. The tool is, however, still under development and further adaptation and testing is needed.
