The synergy possible in a group is remarkable. Frequently, students, workers in a corporation, professors, and managers could do much more to cultivate that synergy. There is a need, early and overtly, for Assessing Group Effectiveness in order to place individual personalities in perspective, value the differences that arise, and meld diverse approaches into effective teamwork. The most effective groups are the ones where everyone understands their unique jobs and then (of course) does them.

This assessment technique focuses on the group task, not on its members. It asks group members individually and anonymously to identify their sense of the task(s) before them, explain the organization they see as necessary to accomplishing the task, and reflect on the diversity of talents and effectiveness of teamwork required to conclude the task successfully. The assessment should be undertaken early --- within a couple weeks of the group's formation. Ideally, the completed assessment forms circulate within the group, become the focus of constructive discussion, and are summarized by the group in a formal, written, one-page report. A professor's role in providing feedback might consist of meeting with the group and orally reinforcing points of agreement and congruence, but identifying inconsistencies and differences as well. Responsibility for adjusting behavior to increase effectiveness rests with the group, not with the professor. The entire process can be repeated later in the semester, especially if a group is having difficulty.

It is important to recognize that there is no assigned praise or blame here; individual group members are not asked to render judgment on anything beyond their own self-effectiveness. Nevertheless, this assessment method works best when trust, honesty, and courtesy are high.

A professor might conduct an end-of-the-semester Minute Paper assessment focused on the groupwork experience ---or perhaps do something more complicated and detailed--- in order to gain summary knowledge of how each group viewed its own effectiveness, internal interactions, sense of fair play, enjoyment, and grades.


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Assessing Group Effectiveness

Sample Form: Assessing Group Effectiveness

Please answer all questions below from your own perspective. If you cannot answer a question, please state briefly why the information is unavailable.

1. What specific goal(s) is this group trying to accomplish? Please list the goal(s) in your priority order. Do you think the group basically agrees on the contents of this list?

____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________

2. What activities has the group specifically chosen to undertake or assign in order to achieve its goals? Which activities, if any, are particularly effective?

____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________

3. Does each group member have specific ---even unique--- responsibilities that help the group attain its goal(s)? List all group members by name and their individual responsibilities.

____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________

4. Do you find the work of your group stimulating and worth your time? How many hours per week do you spend working with this group? In the table below, enter the percentage of these hours spent in each category of effectiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours per week =</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Effective</td>
</tr>
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</table>

5. Does this group have the resources (e.g., organization, communication, leadership, talents, time) to achieve its goals? What additional resources are needed for real effectiveness?