HOW TO PREPARE AND MENTOR GROUP WORK?

de docenten academie

VOOR EFFECTIEF ONDERWIJS

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

Six groups worked together to construct a wetland system for wastewater treatment in Ghana for three weeks. Each group consisted of five international master students and combined different fields of studies. They jointly presented their proposal to their client, a municipal organization. Their construction was the result of a collaborative effort to which all group members contributed and delivered good quality inputs. The groups interacted in a respectful manner.

Several modules of your program include group work as illustrated in the example. This is not by coincidence: you want your students to learn how to execute professional tasks. Also, you want them to learn about the way they and others function within a group, which is especially important since the ability to work together is a necessary skill in your professional field.

Group work is not just about putting a few students together and offering them an assignment. Group work is about integrated learning of professional knowledge, skills and attributes.

This manual considers the following elements of key importance for the accomplishment of effective group work:

1   Students learn their profession by practicing the required competences in an integrated way. The competences are described in the group assignment and follow from the overarching learning plan of the program.
2   Students design, develop and/or create a professional product or deliver a service, such as a procedure, protocol or policy.
3   Students work in a professional setting, preferably with a real world client and in a (simulated) professional practice.
4   Students learn to argue and think as a professional and justify their deliverables with the help of one or more theories and/or models.
5   Students work in independent groups of three or more: they are in charge of their own learning process. They reflect on the assignment and their own working experiences.
6   Students collaborate and learn about how they and others function within a group. This helps students to find out how others react to their contributions and how they themselves react to the contributions of others.
7   Students are mentored by a lecturer, who designs the assignment and helps them - if needed - with the task and the group process. Overall, the lecturer stimulates and facilitates students to learn.

These seven key elements are the starting points for this manual. It offers you a set of best practices on how you design and mentor group work in a balanced and effective way.

Part 1 offers you practical guidelines on how to prepare group work: how do you design a clear assignment, how do you create an examination form, how do you compose effective groups and how do you brief the assignment?
Part 2 is about the actual mentoring: how do you mentor groups at the start and during meetings, how do you evaluate collaboration, how do you deal with malfunctioning groups, how do you provide effective feedback and how do you assess and evaluate the final product?

Each topic is briefly discussed and practical checklists assist you in successfully developing and implementing group work in your program. Enjoy reading!

If you have any comments or additions on this manual, feel free to send an e-mail to info@dedocentenacademie.nl or call us at 06-39575550. You make us happy with your valuable feedback.

De Docentenacademie, 2018

PART 1

HOW TO MAKE
A GOOD START?

The following four paragraphs offer you practical guidelines on how to prepare your group work and how to get started.

After reading these paragraphs:
1 you can design an assignment that stimulates your students to learn and develop the competences required by the professional field;
2 you can create an examination form that assesses the actual learning of your students;
3 you can compose effective groups who work independently on their assignment and stimulate learning from and with each other;
4 you can brief the assignment in an energizing and motivating way.

1.1   Design a clear assignment: be as realistic as possible

After Anneke, Tayo, Andrew, Kimberly and Yemi formed a group, they read the assignment: "First you analyse how the Netherlands executes its water management and conduct interviews with several Dutch actors in the field of water management. Second, you develop an advice for the Council of New Orleans on how to improve their water management. Your advice meets the following requirements…"

Your students need to solve a problem or case of a real client. An assignment that reflects the professional practice is very motivating for your students and optimizes their learning effect. How do you formulate a realistic assignment?

First, you consider how **independent** you want your students to work on the assignment. Depending on the learning situation of your students - especially their experience with group work and/or phase in their study program - you have the following options:

- divide the project in subprojects;
- offer more or less details of the problem;
- offer more or less requirements;
- offer more or less prescribed literature;
- offer more or less guidance.

Second, your assignment encourages **collaboration**. On the one hand, your assignment is too much work and too difficult for one person to tackle. On the other hand, it allows division into subtasks of roughly equal complexity, which are somehow interdependent so that students need to communicate.

Finally, your assignment includes the following **four elements**:
1   **A professional case or problem**: situated in a (simulated) professional practice.
2   **A client**: he/she is the commissioner of the assignment and demands a (specified) professional product/service as the solution for the problem.
3   **An assignment**: requires students to develop/design a professional product/ service. It also invites students to take a clearly defined position as, for example, a consultant or member of a department.
4   **A deliverable and its requirements**: covers professional products/services such as an advice, construction, system or procedure.

Checklist 1 helps you to check if your assignment is complete.

1.2   Create the examination form: begin with the end in mind

For the course 'Constructed wetlands for wastewater treatment' groups design their own wetland system. They are assessed based on assignments, contribution to online discussion and their final paper. Each group justifies its design in a report. In addition, all group members assess their own contribution to the group work and of the other group members.

Your assignment helps your students develop certain competences required by the professional field. To guarantee that your students learn what they are supposed to learn, you assess their actual learning. How you assess your students will influence how they study and what they learn. This makes the examination form a crucial element of your module and not just an afterthought. How do you create a well-defined examination form?

The first step is to decide how you want to operationalize the learning goals and formulate a set of **assessment criteria.** To define clear and valid criteria you take the following steps:
1 Determine the learning objectives that follow from the required competences;
2 Determine the weight of each learning objective;
3 Describe the criteria for each learning objective, being specific and measurable;
4 Determine the weight of each criterion as part of a learning objective;
5 Describe the assessment categories of a criterion (excellent, sufficient, insufficient);
6 Determine the weight of the assessment categories of a criterion.

Checklist 2 helps you to check if your examination form includes all elements.

The second step is to decide how you want to assess the **output**: the actual development of a professional product or service. You can assess the output in three different ways:
1 **Group mark** You give the group an overall mark for the completed assignment. Each member receives the same mark.
2 **Group mark combined with individual assessment** You award one mark to all group members and assess individual contributions as well. For example, 90% of the mark is an overall group mark and 10% is allocated as an individual mark.
3 **Individual mark** You assess individual reports based on the group work OR you assess each individual group member's contribution (as defined by pre-determined criteria) using group provided evidence.

You can also consider the **group process**. For this purpose, you introduce **peer- and/ or self-assessment**. This assessment allows your students to reflect on how they and others function within their group, and how that affects the actual group work.

You can evaluate the group process in two ways:
- **summative assessment**: include clearly pre-described criteria in your examination form (see above);
- and/or **formative assessment**: you use the evaluations for the students' personal reflection so they can improve their group work.

Checklist 3 provides examples of peer- and self-assessment criteria.

1.3   Compose groups: it's all about the learning objectives

One of the learning objectives of the module Water Management is that 'the student is able to engage in appropriate and meaningful communications with international//intercultural stakeholders'. Hans, the module leader, decides to pre-select groups to make sure his students work in a diverse setting.

Group work requires students to work closely with others. A well composed group can be very motivating for students and stimulate positive group experiences. What are the key elements to consider when you compose groups?

The actual task and the learning objectives influence the group composition. If, for example, one of the learning objectives is the collaboration in a multi-disciplinary group you have to compose a group wherein the required disciplines are represented. There are three main methods for group **composition**:
*   **Random allocation** You use a random selection method to form groups, for example allocating a letter, e.g. A,B, C, D, E and group all those of the same letter together, or by the month they were born, star-signs, etc. Random allocation allows students to work with others they usually wouldn't and ensures that students gain from a social and cultural mix.
*   **Staff-selected** You select groups based on information about the students' interests, skills or field of study. This can be an appropriate way of selection when, for example, your students need to design a product that requires different skills and expertise.
*   **Student-selected** You let your students compose their own group. You need to consider that students usually form homogeneous groups on terms of ability, motivation and cultural background, and it is likely that there will be strong groups and weak groups.

The second thing to consider is the **size** of the groups. If your students have a complex task to tackle and you take the study load of your students into account, you can opt for larger groups. In general, students in large groups are likely to feel less motivated for group work and contribute less to the final result. Smaller groups (two-three) have the advantage of greater individual responsibility, but the disadvantage of less diverse input and less opportunity to practice managing the more complex processes that arise when working with more people. Groups of three to six students usually have the highest chance of succeeding.

1.4   Briefing the assignment: make them roll up their sleeves

For the kick-off of the 'Fieldtrip' module, the lecturer invites his students for a briefing. Hans explains in about 30 minutes that they are 'hired' as consultants. Their client, the Andarax River Basin in Spain, wants to improve water management. They ask for different analyses – from analyzing impacts of groundwater over-extraction on water quality to evaluating sustainability challenges for urban water supply. The groups conduct interviews and surveys and in the end formulate recommendations for a water management system.

You designed the assignment, formulated the assessment criteria and composed the groups. Now it is time to meet your students and tell them what to do. How do you brief your assignment? How do you get your students energized and motivated from the beginning?

First, you invite your **external client** to present their problem and main question to your students. An oral briefing simulates the professional practice as much as possible and motivates your students to learn. In case the client is not able or willing to attend the briefing or you have a fictional client, you present yourself as the client's spokesperson.

The client explains that their organization or company has encountered a specific professional problem: **'We, organization X, face a problem with Y. We need your help to solve this.'** The briefing is a **short description** of:
- the organization or company;
- the occasion for the problem;
- the context of the problem;
- the problem and the main question;
- the desired professional product or service;
- the output requirements (for example, when and how the product needs to be delivered).

After the presentation you offer the students the opportunity to ask **questions** about the assignment.

In addition to the oral presentation you provide a **(digital) student manual**, which contains further details on the module, the assignment and the assignment criteria. It also provides information on how the assignment links to the learning goals and competences, guidance and practical information about the literature, weekly schedule and resits. Your manual provides deeper understanding of the assignment and motivates the students to work on it.

Checklist 4 provides a global format of a student manual for group work.

Last but not least, you inform your students about the **division of the groups**. As indicated in the previous paragraph, you prepare this beforehand or you let the students compose their own groups right after the briefing. The briefing takes about **15 to 30 minutes**.

With this briefing you completed the preparation. Now, the actual mentoring begins. **Let's get started!**

PART 2

WHEN AND HOW TO MENTOR A GROUP?

The following six paragraphs offer practical guidelines on how to mentor group work in different situations.

After reading these paragraphs
1 you can help your students to make a great start during their first meeting;
2 you can guide your students in their follow-up meetings while adjust your interventions to the situation;
3 you can instruct your students to evaluate their own collaboration;
4 you can guide malfunctioning groups to minimize irritation and conflicts;
5 you can provide effective feedback and help your students to stay on the right track;
6 you can assess the final product and help your students to reflect on their output and group process in a constructive way.

2.1   The first meeting: your students make a great start

Anneke, Tayo, Andrew, Kimberly and Yemi form a group of consultants. Their mentor Hans asks them to start their first meeting with an icebreaker. They have a lot of fun sharing which famous person from the past they would like to be. Then Hans asks them to discuss the best way to work together and write this down in an official group agreement. Hans compliments them on their excellent planning and definition of their deliverables.

Your preparation is complete: you designed the assignment, formulated the assessment criteria, composed groups and briefed your students. Before the groups start to work on their task, they first need to talk about what they expect of their work. How can you facilitate them during this first meeting?

Step 1 – Getting to know each other You let your students get acquainted. The more students know about each other, the safer they will feel. This stimulates an open atmosphere and helps students to learn about and from each other.

Checklist 5 lists examples of how your students can 'break the ice'.

Step 2 – The group agreement You ask students to work on their group agreement. They discuss, for example, what they expect of each other, their collaboration and of you in your role as mentor. They share former experiences, personal learning goals and indicate what they need from the other group member to perform. Also, they select their group representative and record all agreements in an official group agreement.

Checklist 6 provides a practical overview of the essential elements of a group agreement.

In this or next meeting, you ask questions on how they managed the discussion. Were there differences in opinions? How did they deal with these differences? This helps you to understand how the group interacts, what they consider to be important in the collaboration and what their planned activities are. Also, you learn what they expect from you as their mentor, while you share your expectations and clarify how you want to collaborate with them. You emphasize that the group agreement is an 'organic' document. After a while, specific agreements may appear to be unrealistic or new agreements need to be added.

Step 3 – Plan of action You ask your students to work out their plan of action. They draft the following:
- **Product backlog** What is the assignment? What are the deliverables of the group work? Which activities are needed to produce these deliverables? What is the planning?
- **Definition of Done** What should each deliverable look like? What are the criteria for the best result of your deliverables (content, grammar**,** spelling, other criteria)?
- **Definition of Fun** What makes it fun to work with your group? How will they celebrate (the milestones)?

You facilitate the discussion by asking questions and summarizing, but only if needed. Also, you give feedback on their plan of action (see 2.5).

The purpose of the first meeting is to assure a good start of the group work and build a supportive group atmosphere. This prevents future conflicts and helps to discuss group work.

2.2 Follow-up meetings: control and release

Anneke, Tayo, Andrew, Kimberly and Yemi meet their mentor Hans every other week. When Hans asks how things are going, they acknowledge that they find it difficult to formulate valid questions for their interviews. Hans offers to set up a meeting with Kees, the research expert at the institute.

Your groups work independently in a professional setting. They are in charge of their own learning process and meetings. You remain in the background and help them, if necessary or when asked for. Your main role is to facilitate and stimulate the learning of your students. When do you offer your help and how do you guide them?

First, not you but your students decide on **when** they want to meet you. They are responsible for their output and take the initiative. Your students have the following options:
1 **Weekly or bi-weekly meetings** This is mentioned in their group agreement and was decided in consultation with you (see 2.1).
2 **Consultation** You offer your students a specific number of 'consultation hours' on a set day and time. It is up to them to decide whether to 'use' these hours or not.
3 **Your students only invite you for a meeting** when they need your help. For example, when they get stuck in their research or lack specific knowledge. This may also be additional to the (bi-)weekly meetings.

Even if your students don't show up at meetings: always check their progress! For example, you can ask the group representative to share the minutes of their meetings. Though the group is in charge of their own work, monitoring the group progress helps you to make sure that nothing is hindering their learning and collaboration. Depending on your own evaluation of the group work, you can decide to intensify your guidance and organize a meeting. Beforehand you make sure this is mentioned in the group agreement (see checklist 6 – supervision).

Second, you consider **how** you mentor your group. The level of your guidance and intervention depends on the questions of your students, but also on your own evaluation of the group work. You intervene when you can answer the following question with a 'yes': is somebody or something bothering the learning process of the group and/or its members?

You can intervene on four different levels:
Level 1 - Your students start the meeting with a discussion of their task, collaboration and planning (see 2.3). You sit in, **listen and observe**.

Level 2 - In case you have doubts about their output and/or group process, you **ask questions** to help your students to analyze a specific issue. For example, you ask the group to clarify their research methods or you ask them to dive deeper in their task division.

Checklist 7 helps you to ask the right questions.

Level 3 - The analysis of your students (level 2) combined with your own knowledge and experience with the assignment, tell you that certain things are not covered. You ask questions to **get clear what is missing**.

Level 4 - You intervene with **help or advice**. For example, when it becomes clear that your group needs essential information to continue with its assignment, you first ask what they need and/or how they can solve this. Next you can give further explanation or refer to sources. In case you don't possess the required knowledge, you ask your students how they can get the needed expertise to keep them responsable for their own process. If they don't come up with any ideas you can suggest to invite a fellow-lecturer to perform as expert. Or if your students lack knowledge and/or skills to work on the assignment, you refer to previous courses and help them to learn from them.

Overall, your aim is to help your groups to learn. After a meeting you ask students to evaluate their own progress and consider what stimulated and what blocked their learning. Also, consider your own observations. Often you can keep your interventions to a minimum level. Your groups work independently and manage their own learning process. You increase the level of your help and guidance when you have doubts about the quality of the task or group process, or when your students explicitly ask you for help.

It's up to you to find the right balance between control and release.

2.3   Evaluation of collaboration: stimulate an open atmosphere

When the group evaluates their collaboration, Yemi writes on a post-it note: 'I notice that Andrew and Kimberley don't let me join the group discussions. Their dominant behaviour makes me feel left out, as if my opinion doesn't count." Yemi reads out his post-it note to the group members and explains his issue. He puts his post-it note in the quadrant 'Improve'.

Your students work on their assignment and experience how they and others function in a group in a professional setting. For this purpose, they need to discuss their collaboration, failures and successes. How can a group evaluate its collaboration?

Your students can use **DAKI**, which stands for 'Drop-Add-Keep-Improve'. It is a great method to stimulate groups to think about their practices. It helps group members understand each other, stimulate good practices and remove hindrances that block good collaboration. It also helps create a safe learning environment, in which all group members learn to speak out.

How do you introduce DAKI? In the second meeting with your group, you explain the method and **present the 10 steps** of DAKI. You **facilitate their first evaluation** and make sure they can apply DAKI in their next meeting without your help.

Checklist 8 provides you an example of a DAKI-poster.

Step 1   You let the group draw 4 quadrants on a poster and stick this on the wall.
Step 2   Each group member writes down his/her issue (e.g. 'starting too late') in post-it notes and explains each note to the other group members. An explanation consists of 'behaviour, emotion and effect'.
            For example: 'I notice we always start our meeting too late and that gives me the impression that we don't take our work serious. It also leads to less effort from my part.'
            Don't let the group or yourself come up with any solutions or advice at this stage.
Step 3   Each group member posts its notes in the relevant quadrant.
Step 4   You ask the group to look for overlap in the quadrants and categorize them if necessary. For example: not everybody listens when a group member speaks and chaotic discussion -> rules of communication.
Step 5   Each group member writes down their top 3 of 'most relevant issues'.
            For example: 1. reaching deadlines, 2. clear communication rules and 3. equal contribution.
Step 6   The group lists all the issues and sticks them on the poster.
Step 7   The group comes to an agreement on the top 3 of issues by voting or giving points.
Step 8   Each group member has to write down one specific action for each issue. An action needs to be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Realistic and Timely.
Step 9   The group decides which actions are most relevant.
Step 10 The group defines who is going to do what and to make an action plan for the upcoming week.

Each successive meeting the group evaluates their action plan and starts a new DAKI (see 2.2).

2.4   Malfunctioning groups: dealing with deviant behavior

Mentor Hans learns from Tayo and Yemi, two students from one of his groups, that they have to correct most of Robert's writing due to errors in his grammar and spelling. The group has discussed this issue in a meeting using DAKI. According to Tayo and Yemi, Robert agreed to check his own writing, but they haven't seen any changes. The group members don't know how to deal with this situation anymore. Hans decides to intervene.

Each group shows different behavioural patterns. Some members like to talk a lot, others will prefer to sit back and listen to what's being said, whilst others prefer to disagree with assertions made by others. These patterns affect the way group members interact and influence the results of the assignment. Sometimes, they are manifest already during the first meeting and cause irritation and conflicts. What are the main patterns and how can you intervene when the group doesn't know how to deal with deviant behaviour?

What are the main patterns?
The first pattern is **the so called free-rider.** A well-known problem is the group member who doesn´t seem to invest much time in the group work. In the beginning they seem to be cooperative, bring in opinions and agree with arrangement the group has made. More and more frequently, however, they come up with excuses for not carrying out their own part of the group work. This causes irritation and a feeling of unfairness as the free-riders will be graded the same as the other students while being less productive.

The second pattern is **the silent student.** Some students make little effort to contribute to the discussion. However, this does not reflect the amount of work that they may have carried out beforehand. It may have to do with the character or upbringing of the individual or caused by dominant group members who are very present in meetings.

The third pattern is **the long-winded student.** Some group members are very eager to get their ideas, experiences and interpretations across. Their contributions can become a mishmash of words and fail to make any impact.

What to do?
Your students are in charge of their own learning. They share their observations and discuss irritations and conflicts as part of their evaluation of collaboration (see 2.3).

You intervene when the discussion stagnates or certain behaviour hinders the learning of the group. You intervene as little as possible and only intensify your intervention when the group doesn't respond. You take the following steps:
1   You start with sharing your own observations: "I see the following happen ... Is this correct?"
2   When they confirm your observation, you can add: "What can you do to make sure that X ... ?" This question helps to keep the input of the group in focus.
3   If the group can't find a solution, you give account of your interpretation of the situation and propose a solution. "I think that X and I suggest….."
After discussing a solution, the group may have to adjust their group agreement

Checklist 9 provides you an overview of the different levels of interventions.

What if your students end up in a conflict?
Instead of reaching a joint decision, groups sometimes end up in a conflict. The discussion gets out of hand: students are not willing to listen to group members any more or blame each other.

If the students are not able to solve the conflict in any ways, you need to intervene. Sometimes members of the group will ask you explicitly to intervene. In both cases you take a neutral stand and take the following steps:

Step 1 – Explore Introduce the problem in an objective and impartial way. You emphasize that group work often has its issues and compliment the group members that took the initiative to discuss the conflict.
Step 2 - Analyze Start with asking all group members to think about how they think about the collaboration of the group. Then you ask each student to share their perception. When everybody has spoken, the students define the (group) problem.
Step 3 – Search for options and solutions Ask your students to think of a solution. This gives students ownership of the group process and makes them more willing to solve the problem. The students make a joint decision and formulate the best solution. The students make clear agreements, such as a revision of the division of roles or additional sanctions. The group may have to adjust their group agreement.

Checklist 10 gives you a detailed approach on how to deal with a conflict in a group meeting.

Deviant behaviour and conflict in groups can be both productive and destructive. When conflict arises within a group, students often struggle to deal with it. Overall, students are responsible for managing their own group problems. You monitor team progress as a strategy to deal with conflict and intervene when the learning process of your students is at stake.

2.5   Stay on track: providing effective feedback

Anneke, Tayo, Andrew, Kimberly and Yemi give Hans their mentor, an update on their research project and hand in their first concept of the analysis of their interviews. Hans compliments them on their progress and the high quality of their interviews. Then he asks them if they have any questions and provides feedback on their analysis. He asks them to summarize his feedback and how they plan to implement his suggestions.

You meet your students while they are in the process of designing, developing or creating a professional product or service. This process usually includes certain milestones and intermediary products. Students want to check if they are on the right track. Your feedback helps them correct or adjust their work if needed. How do you provide effective feedback on the output of your students?

Step 1 - Do they meet the assessment criteria?
1. Ask the student:
    a. 'With reference to the assessment criteria, what do you consider strong and weak points of your output such as your research, prototype, etc.?'
    b. 'Questions do you have? What is it that you need to know now?'
2. Start with giving compliments on the result
    a. Provide clear examples;
    b. Point out the effect on their output.
3. Give general feedback on other topics, for example 'phrasing'
    a. Indicate the weak points;
    b. Point out the effect on their output and link to criteria for success;
    c. Give examples of the weak point and its effect on the output;
    d. Also show a good example ('You can do it!');
    e. Let the students think of a solution. If not, you give a solution.

Step 2 - Do they understand my feedback?
4. Check if the students understand your feedback. Ask the students to rephrase what you just explained.
5. Ask the students how they feel about the feedback.

Step 3 - What will they do different next time?
6. Ask your student to summarize what he/she will change and let him/her makes notes of this.
7. Ask the student to create a plan of improvement.

2.6 The final moment: assess and evaluate

After three months of hard work, Anneke, Tayo, Andrew, Kimberly and Yemi present their advice to their client, the Andarax River Basin in Spain. After their lecturer Hans determined their grade, he emails the examination form to his students and invites them for a personal feedback session. During this meeting Hans compliments them for their good and professional work. Two students ask questions about the assessment of their surveys and interviews and Hans clarifies his observations. The students evaluate their collaboration and conclude that more frequent meetings would have avoided some misunderstandings. They decide to work on this in the group of the following module.

Your students worked hard on the assignment and they are ready to present their ideas to their (fictional) client. The simulation of this real life working situation stimulates their learning process as they apply theory, justify their experiences and collaborate with their group members. Now it is up to you to assess: did they actually learn what they were supposed to learn? How do you assess their final product or service? How do you evaluate the group process?

Assessment
Before you composed the groups, you already determined the assessment criteria and decided to assess both output and/or group process. You use the **examination form** to assess the final output (see 1.2).

After you handed over your completed examination form to your students, you meet with your group **face-to-face**. This way you can clarify your assessment and answer questions of your students, if necessary. The final meeting also gives you the opportunity to compliment your students on their work in a personal way. Last, you check if your students actually understood your feedback and learn how they plan to implement your feedback in the future (see 2.5).

Evaluation of collaboration
Next to practicing the required competences, your students also learned about how they and others function within a group. For this reason, you ask your students to evaluate both their own and their group members' **contributions**. Also, you ask them to consider what stimulated and what blocked their collaboration and how they can implement these experiences in their future group work.

Finally, you can share your own observations with the group: what do you think went well? What do you think went not so well? And, as a lecturer, what did you learn from this group yourself?

Overall, your main goal is to help your group to learn effectively and remove any obstacle that hinders their learning outcome. Your feedback and the evaluation of the group process helps your students to learn what they are supposed to learn and succeed in the professional practice.

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CHECKLISTS

Checklist 1 How to design an assignment?

This checklist offers you an overview of the required content of a clear assignment. If you can tick off all seven elements, this means your assignment is clear and complete.

Your assignment includes descriptions of:

1   The motivation of the problem
    Describe the importance of the assignment in relation to the professional practice.

2   The description of the problem
    Describe a realistic case including drawings, original project descriptions, quotes, contracts, websites of organizations, etc.

3   The client
    Describe the commissioning company or client.

4   The role or positioning of the students
    Describe the position of the students (consultant, manager, etc.).

5   The deliverable(s) and its requirements
    Describe which professional product or service needs to be delivered (procedure, protocol, policy etc).

6   The assessment
    Describe how the deliverable will be assessed and by whom.

7   Feedback
    Describe how lecturers guide groups, e.g. consultation hours.

Checklist 2 – How to create an examination form?

This examination form helps you assess the final output of a group. The minimal passing mark is 5.5 (55 points out of 100). You can also use this form to determine an individual mark. In this case, you award two separate grades or average the group and individual grade.

Date:

Name student:	Student number:
	Class:
Result:	EC:
Assessor:	Signature:

Conditional part

Conditions: are these fulfilled before the assignment can be assessed?	Fulfilled?	
..	Yes	No
..	Yes	No
Total: all conditions are fulfilled	Yes	No
Feedback conditional part		

Assessment criteria

	Excellent	Sufficient	Insufficient	
Learning objective 1:				Weight 20 Minimum 11
Criterion 1:	C1: What must the student demonstrate for excellent level? (8-10)	What must the student demonstrate for sufficient level? (4-7)	When is it insufficient? (0-3)	10
Criterion 2:				5
Criterion ...	C2:			
	C...:			
Learning objective 2:				Weight 40 Minimum 21
Criterion 1:	C1: What must the student demonstrate for excellent level? (8-10)	What must the student demonstrate for sufficient level? (4-7)	When is it insufficient? **(0-3)**	**10**
Total: how is the result calculated?				Total is 100 minimum 55
Feedback content part				

Checklist 3 – Self- and peer assessment

The criteria for self- and peer assessment can be used for both formative (= monitoring student learning) and summative (= evaluating student learning) assessment.

A.   Self-evaluation criteria – Example

Self Name:	Your mark from 1-10
Part A: Compulsory Criteria: Allocate a mark for each of the following 5 items	
Level of engagement with the work of the group	
Degree of respect for the opinions/input of others into decision making	
Willingness to take on a role: completes responsibilities on time	
Active attempts to ensure the inclusion of all group members in project	
Degree of assertiveness (avoiding passivity, submissiveness or domination)	
Part B: Other criteria: Allocate a mark for each of the following 5 items	
Planning and conducting meetings	
Keeping and sharing minutes in a timely manner	
Participation in XXXXX (e.g. literature searching)	
Participation in XXXXX (e.g. the introduction)	
Checking and editing the work of others	
Total mark out of 100	
Specific comments on how you aim to improve your contribution to the group work:	

B.   Peer assessment criteria – Example

Peer Name:	Your mark from 1-10
Part A: Compulsory Criteria: Allocate a mark for each of the following 5 items	
Level of engagement with the work of the group	
Degree of respect for the opinions/input of others into decision making	
Willingness to take on a role: completes responsibilities on time	
Active attempts to ensure the inclusion of all group members in project	
Degree of assertiveness (avoiding passivity, submissiveness or domination)	
Part B: Other criteria: Allocate a mark for each of the following 5 items	
Planning and conducting meetings	
Keeping and sharing minutes in a timely manner	
Participation in XXXXX (e.g. literature searching)	
Participation in XXXXX (e.g. the introduction)	
Checking and editing the work of others	
Total mark out of 100	
Specific feedback for peer:	

Checklist 4 - Student manual for group work

This checklist offers you a global format for a student manual for group work.

1   General information
- module name and code and education credits (ecs)
- lecturers, module coordinator

2   Module content
- module subject, brief description
- goal & focus of the subject
- relevance of the subject and the place it holds within the program
- module structure: work methods, guidance and facilities
- weekly schedule
- literature

3   Learning objectives and competences
- learning goals of module and grading level
- linked to a competence including the level (for example: C1)
- learning goals per lesson (when needed)

4   Assessment and grading
- kind of assessment(s): explicit naming of formative and summative assessments, individual and/or group grading and learning goals addressed per assessment
- minimum passing grade

5   Assignment
- description of the problem
- motivation for adressing the problem
- context of the problem
- the client
- the role or positioning of the students
- the deliverables and its requirements
- assessment criteria with a link to the examination form
- manner of giving feedback

6   Presentation (when applicable)
- subject, date & duration
- means a group can use
- assessment criteria with a link to the grading form
- manner of giving feedback

7   Resits
- resit possibilities: how, where, when and requirements

Checklist 5 – Icebreakers

Icebreakers are most useful when group members do not know each other very well. One icebreaker in the first session and one for a subsequent session (optional) are usually beneficial.

The rule of thumb is that icebreakers include all group members, that they are energizing and that they take 5-10 minutes.

A list of examples is given below.

1   **What's in common?** Within a short period, everyone must introduce themselves to each member of the group. Alternatively, each student can also present one piece of information about themselves, such as their name, previous study and country of origin.
In addition, each student must find two things in common with each person they introduce themselves to (e.g. their names begin with A, same star sign, football club, etc.)

2   **Connections** The group stands in a circle. Call out, one by one, a list of things people might have in common (e.g. everyone wearing a blue jumper, who arrived by bus, who has been to Amsterdam, etc.). For each item called, those for whom it is relevant stand in the middle of the group (or to another allocated space).

3   **Find someone who...** All students are given a list of 'characteristics', perhaps presented in a 'bingo card' format, and they have to find and list at least one person in the group for each characteristic. For example: is a Gemini, has been to China, lives in Delft, has twins in the family, etc.

4   **Interviews** In pairs: interview a partner for three minutes each. In the full group, each person makes a one sentence introduction of one person to the whole group.

5   **Achievements** Each person names one achievement in their life.

6   **Fame** Each names a famous person from the past they would like to have been.

7   **Tall tales In pairs:** each person says 3 things about themselves one of which is not true. In the full group, each person introduces their partner by name, relays the three pieces of information, and guesses which they believe is false. Their partner then reals which information was false.

8   **Objects** If they were an animal (or plant, color, musical instrument, etc.), which one do they think they would be?

Checklist 6 – Group agreement

A group agreement includes the following elements.

1 Project description
Describe the assignment in your own words

2 Goals
What grade do you aspire? As a group and individually?

3 Roles and responsibilities
How will you divide several roles? Will you alternate roles during the project, e.g. group leader and secretary? Who is responsible for which tasks? Who is the group representative?

4 Group ground rules
How will you determine the quality of work of each individual group member? How will you measure the performance? How will you work together, e.g punctuality, respect? How do we create a safe environment? How do we deal with social media?

5 Meetings
How often will you meet? What preparation is needed for the meetings? Who will make the minutes and agenda?

6 Decision making
How will you make decisions? By means of consensus or majority counts?

7 Participation
What do you expect of each group member prior, during and after a meetings? How will you determine the contribution of each member? How will you determine the quality of each member's output?

8 Communication
How will you communicate with each other? What information will you share via WhatsApp, e-mail, Facebook, phone etc.? How will you communicate with your mentor?

9 Share of file
Which platforms will you use to store and share your documents? Who is responsible for the merging of the files?

10 In case of conflicts
How will you deal with conflicts within the group?

11 Sanctions
What if group members don't meet the agreements? Every group member should know the consequences when they break the rules, e.g. when your work is of poor quality, you have to improve the work or should do extra work

12 Supervision
What guidance do you expect of our mentor? What kind of feedback would you like to receive and about what? How do you want to cooperate with our mentor? How often do you want to meet with him/her?

Checklist 7 - Asking questions

Asking questions is an important tool when you guide group discussions. You can ask questions about the group process and the content. Both require different questions.

A.   Questions about the process
You always ask open questions, especially beginning with **'what'**. For example, 'What did you want to achieve?', 'What is your problem?' and 'What did you do or say?'

The questions you ask should not add anything new. You repeat as many words as possible.

For example:
Student: I find the assignment very difficult.
Your question: What do you find difficult?

The question is not 'What are you afraid of?' or 'What are your concerns?'. These questions add new words and will take the student away from his analysis.

You stay away from 'why' questions, as these will make the student feel as if they have to justify their behaviour. 'Why didn't you finish your task?' or 'Why weren't you present yesterday?' Instead yo can explore what is happenings by asking neutraal questions like 'What made you decide not to finish you task?' Or 'What triggered you to decide not to come to our meeting yesterday?'.

Finally, 'how' questions are weak questions, because the answers can take all kinds of directions. The question 'How did you approach this problem?' can be answered with 'quiet' or 'by thinking really hard' or 'systematic'.

Questions such as 'What makes the assignment difficult?', 'What did you do to solve this problem?' and 'What will be the benefits?' are stronger: clear and specific.

B.   Questions about the content

Type of question	Activity	Examples
Knowledge	• Remember facts or observations • Remember definitions	• What? • Who? • Where? • When? • Why? (if a cause is given)
Understanding	• Provide a description • Main issue, what's essential? • Compare • Determine correlation • Explain in your own words • Describe differences	• What is the essence of… • What are the main issues of this theory? • What are the similarities between both methods? • What is the difference between both theories?
Apply	• Determine principles, techniques, rules, methodologies, apply to an example with only one answer as a possibility • Recognize principles, methodologies, concepts in examples	• If (Ben has 49 cent), how many (balloons of each 8 cent can he buy)? • What is the geographical breadth of Moscow? • Which of these poems is a sonnet?
Analysis	• Indicate motives and causes • Cause and effect • Find indications to support an opinion	• What idea is the foundation of …? • Which indications confirm (…)? • Substantiate the following statement
Synthesis	• Solve problems • Make predictions • Think or create something original • Implement a task	• What would happen if..? • What is a solution for this problem?
Evaluation	• Give your opinion about a certain issue • Determine the value of a solution for a specific problem	• What is your opinion on this matter? • What value has the solution for…

Checklist 8 – DAKI poster

DROP

ADD

KEEP

IMPROVE

Checklist 9 - Ladder of interventions

It is preferable to intervene as little as possible (step 1 to 5) as students are responsible for their own learning process. Only when group members are not able to find a solution together, you move to step 6 to 10.

Step 1 to 5 focuses on the contribution of the students.

Step 6 to 10 focuses on the contribution of the lecturer.

1 **Listen, watch and observe**: content and relation**.**
2 **Humming and hamming**: send non-verbal signals.
3 **Reflect content** = summarizing, **reflect feelings** = mirroring.
4 **Ask supplementary questions** to get more information.
5 **Structure**: summarize in an objective and neutral way.

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6 **Provide information** in your role as expert.
7 **Interpret** to draw conclusions as lecturer.
8 **Evaluate** to give your opinion about the discussion of your students.
9 **Advice**: in some cases this is the highest level you can operate as lecturer.
10 **Force**: show your authority as lecturer.

Checklist 10 - How to handle conflicts?

If your group is not able to solve a conflict in any ways, you need to intervene. By taking the following steps you can help your group members to find a solution together.

Phase 1 - Explore
- Mention why you think there is a problem and the possible consequences of the conflict
- Ask all members to listen to each other
- Let all members express their point of view on the problem
- Ask all group members to mention his/her interest and their common interests
- Ask them which interests come first

Phase 2 - Analyze
- What are the causes of the problem according to the group members?
- What are the facts?
- What is the concrete problem? Redefine the problem (write down)

Phase 3 - Search for options and solutions
- Summarize the different points of view on the problem (write down)
- Mention the common interests
- Ask all group members for possible solutions
- Ask all group members which concessions they can or need to make
- Ask them to write an agreement
- Make a new appointment to monitor the progress

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