

”We’re in this together”: Co-creating a group work agreement to support students’ interpersonal and task specific groupwork skills

Tuesday 2 September 2025 13:30 (22 minutes)

Introduction

Assessed group work is an authentic method of assessment, yet managing the group work process is challenging for both students and teachers (Forsell et al., 2019), with an uneven distribution of workload, task complexity, and lack of shared expectations perceived as particularly problematic (McKay & Sirdharan, 2024; Poort et al., 2022).

To support students’ group working skills, we developed the group work agreement, a resource designed to support the group work process by scaffolding task allocation and establishing ground rules to facilitate an inclusive group work environment.

Students co-created their agreement, prompting discussion of communication strategies, timelines and task allocation. Individual students submitted their group agreement as a formative activity, with staff monitoring engagement.

RQ: How does student engagement with the group work agreement impact students’ group working skills over time?

Methods

Participants (Psychology students from the University of Glasgow (N = 33) were assessed on their interpersonal and task specific skills using the Group Work Skills Questionnaire, (Cumming et al., 2015): once before the group work commenced and again 4-6 weeks later, after students had submitted their group agreement and completed the group work. Qualitative survey questions were designed to ask about students’ experiences of groupwork and obtain feedback on the activity.

Results

Students’ GSQ scores were compared between timepoints and initial findings suggest that students’ groupwork skills improved on the task but not on the interpersonal subscale. This aligns with the qualitative findings, suggesting that the students found the task allocation particularly helpful.

Discussion

These findings indicate the importance of scaffolded support for group organisation in the early stages of group work, and suggest further developments are needed to support interpersonal group working skills. Future research will include a control group to compare development of students’ group work skills in the absence of a group work agreement.

Is the first author also the speaker?

Yes

If first author is not the speaker, please indicate speaker’s name here:

Please indicate up to five keywords regarding the content of your contribution

1) Groupwork 2) Skill Development 3) Student Experience 4) Authentic Assessment

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