

Cooperate more / Compete less

Students are happy to work together on homework and in small group in class activities – superficial cooperation.

Students do not like to be assessed as a group and earn a shared grade = worry about slackers and work hogs.

Students very uncomfortable in delegating to peers.

- Cultural norm to 'Be Independent'
- Depending on others is uncomfortable – especially when they are not like you.
- Expectation of high level of independent testing in primary and secondary school.

Student Comments

- Quote from a student that earned a high A in course
'So I did the math on this participation points thing.....
Because of the average of the scores I'm getting from my classmates, I am losing 0.8% of my overall grade in the class'
- Quote from a student that did not pass
'Regarding the quiz, I don't want to knock anybody but I feel the group I was with did not display much effort. I felt like I was constantly telling them what to write down and what to include as I tend to explain in great detail my answers. If there was a choice, I would eliminate group quizzes. I feel that if each person is responsible for their quizzes and it would make them study the curriculum harder and be more serious.'

Do you think that --

- they do not understand the benefits of working together?
- they do not know how to work together in a professional setting?
- they are uncomfortable helping each other (with the zero-sum mindset that if you do better I will do worse)?

Ideas -

- Design activities that let students conclude that working together is beneficial (and not a forced activity)
- One small step at a time. One class will not change their mind. Design activities that model some part of a cooperating environment.