

The **group contract**: A new approach to manage common problems found in **group work**

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The Yankees: The most successful professional sports **team** in the USA



They have won:

- 19 American League East Division titles
- 40 American League pennants
- 27 World Series championships



The Yankees: A brief period when they were **losing**



- The team's owner spent large amounts of money to hire the **best baseball players in the world**
- Despite the star players, the team was striking out
- The new players could not **work together**; each one tried to be the **hero** on each game



This example illustrates...



- The degree to which individuals work together to promote **each other's achievements....** largely determines **effectiveness**



Group Work Benefits- Pedagogic literature



- active exchange of **ideas** within groups
- increases **motivation** among participants
- promotes **critical thinking**
- fosters **socialization**
- improves attitudes towards **learning**
- develops a better understanding of **diverse cultural** background

e.g., Clarke, 2004; Gerdy, 1998;

Gillies & Ashman, 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 2000; Johnson, Johnson, &

Smith, 1991; Sharan, 1980; Slavin, 1980; Vygotskii, 1978



Group Work Problems

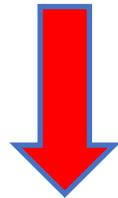


Motivational issues

Free rider

Inequity based motivation loss

Ethnic mix effect



Student experience usually falls below their expectations.



Collaborative learning theoretical framework



In collaborative learning, students participate in **small-group** activities in which they share their **knowledge and expertise**.

In these student-driven activities, the teacher usually acts as a **facilitator**



The Group Contract



A new approach to manage common problems in formal learning group work.

Applications of the Group Contract



Levels 5 & 6 & 7

Summative Assignments

Live briefs

Practical experience of seven
years in HE

Piloted more widely in SMI in
2019-20



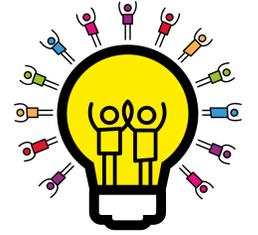
What is the Group Contract?



A written agreement among group members concerning roles and responsibilities & ways of working before the group work begins

The Group Contract Template

Version 2020-2021





Group Assignment Contract Tasks, 1, 2, 3

Attention: To be signed by the Module Leader, and to be submitted after the cover page in your group report.

Module Leader:

Name of Team:

Names of Team Member

Role

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Task 1

| Discuss and write what can go wrong when working as a group for this assignment | Brainstorm and agree as a team a solution |
|---|---|
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Task 2

Write down the agreed ground rules to work collaboratively and efficiently as a group for this assignment

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Task 3

Agree specific roles and DETAILED responsibilities and expectations from each member.

Sign this group contract and ask from your instructor to sign it as well. Keep it and submit it with the assignment.

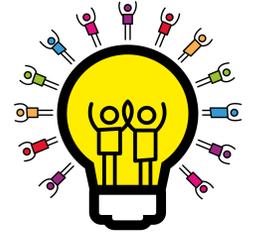
| Name/Role | Detailed responsibilities/expectations | Signature |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| | | |
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| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Instructor

Signature



Illustrative Example



- ✓ **Level 6, SMI**
- ✓ **Core & Elective Module**
- ✓ **Large, Diversified Cohort**
- ✓ **23 Groups**

Allocation of Marks

| | Allocated Marks |
|---|-----------------|
| <p>Group Contract</p> <p>The group contract is an agreed statement of the ways of working among the team members and it has to be completed prior to the initiation of the project. It has to be agreed by all the members and the instructor. The contract form is attached below (page 10) and, it should be completed and presented after the cover page of the report.</p> | 10 |
| <p>International Industry Analysis</p> <p>This section begins with a brief description of the company. It then covers a detailed analysis of the sector size and growth/decline (in value and volume), in the selected international market, and the reasons why for the growth or decline. This section also covers a detailed analysis of the competitors. In this section it is important to adopt an appropriate international business/management theory/framework for your analysis.</p> <p>Sources of information and, at least 8-10 academic references from academic journals such as Harvard Business Review, International Business Studies, Management International Review, International Small Business Journal, Journal of Business Venturing.</p> <p>Items to include in the section: Critical discussion of the industry analysis by adopting tools from the Critical Thinking Toolkit, Competitors and market strength</p> <p><i>Helpful tools available on Canvas: Critique, The Argument</i></p> | 30 |
| <p>Business Plan</p> <p>This section is a detailed marketing and financial plan on how the brand/company/organisation will market/sell profitably its business in the international market.</p> <p>Sources: McKinsey Quarterly, Nielsen and IRI reports, the Economist, the Financial Times, Business Weekly and other practitioner data</p> <p>Items to include is: Product – Store experience, Branding, Unique selling proposition, P&L profiling and market strength, Competitors mode of operation.</p> <p><i>Helpful tools available on Canvas: The Source, Practitioner Insights</i></p> | 40 |
| <p>Organisation and Mechanics</p> <p>The whole structure of the report should follow the above mentioned outline. Check carefully for spelling, grammar, syntax and punctuation errors. Harvard style of</p> | 10 |

Illustrative Example Team 1 (High Performers)



Task 1

| Discuss and write what can go wrong when working as a group for this assignment | Brainstorm and agree as a team a solution |
|---|---|
| Members do not show up to meetings | Send email reminder prior to meeting; must inform other members will have a meeting to find out why Hold meeting to discuss, + re distribute if necessary and offer support. |
| Unequal work distribution | |
| Individual work contribution is unequal | Speak with members in question; PM will keep draft of individuals work log, + meeting attendance |
| Individuals assigned incorrect tasks | Bring to attention of PM; and do full evaluation of members abilities |
| Members unable to meet internal deadlines due to external commitments | Make PM aware of external commitments and request extension prior to deadline. |
| Communication breakdown between members | Call meeting immediately to discuss. Bring attention to lecturer if necessary |
| Members deviating from set goals | Have regular team reviews to ensure all members are on task and track. |

~~One member~~

TASK 2

Write down the agreed ground rules to work collaboratively and efficiently as a group for this assignment

All work to be sent by email w/ CC of all members.

Use FB group for day-to-day communication, and email for scheduling and work

Use Google docs for collaborative work, and record all timestamps + log for records.

Group meetings are mandatory, if member unable to attend, must inform group 24hrs prior.
→ must be requested 48hrs prior to set deadline.

If extensions are needed internally, request from PM who will confirm w/ other members.

Every member ^{has the right} ~~shall~~ feel to be heard + express their ideas freely without dismissal
PM has veto power.

Should a member wish to change their role, it must be agreed by all members

If members are unhappy with PM, they may bring it to the attention of PM, and PM will

Task 2 Should I be a member of the group?

BS 6203



Critical Reflection
Overall Learning Experience Group Assignment
 Thames Valley International Consultants
 Your Names:



Reflection should contain the following information:

Reflection: What happened that you are going to reflect on (incident, assignment, event, or idea)? What did you do? What happened? How was it handled? What was the result/outcome?

Delegated roles to ensure work was spread equally and everyone knew their roles.
 Identified work from certain group members that was not up to standard, an email was sent to notify them, with a timeline set for improved version to be submitted to the group.
 Group work resulted in very good quality in the end, met the deadline and have time to make final adjustments.

Feelings: What were your reactions and feelings?

Took a while to get started, missed a couple internal deadlines
 Worked well and effectively in the end.
 Good communication led diligently by team assignment coordinator.
 Now very happy with our group and ahead of our internal schedule.

Evaluation: What was good and bad about the experience? Why did you feel that way? Were you happy with the outcome? What aspect would you like to change?

Good—communication was effective ensuring all members were kept in the loop. Quality of work (end product) is very impressive. Deadlines set ensured progress was being made at all times. Very happy with overall outcome, overcame internal struggles to produce a professional and quality report. In hindsight, would ensure standard of work expected was set from the beginning to stop internal struggles, otherwise the group worked very effectively.

Bad—internal struggles over missed lectures and poor work.

Analysis: What sense can you make of the situation? Bring in ideas from outside the experience to help you (both personal and theoretical). What was really going on (namely what did you infer that wasn't explicitly stated)? What have you learned?

Joseph—I have personally worked in the hospitality industry as a general manager for eight years. Specialising in restaurant of up to a 100 covers in London and Hong Kong. This enabled me to make many financial justifications due to industry experience.

Josh—worked for Raffles Hotel, Dubai as a cook chef

Maggie—work placement at Marriott Hotel Heathrow

Conclusions: What can be concluded from these experiences and the analysis you have undertaken? What strengths and weaknesses did it reveal? What new skills/knowledge/attitudes have you acquired?

The food delivery industry in the UK is growing exponentially.

The industry is highly competitive with low barriers to entry.

The Italian food industry is highly saturated.

On a whole, we had some issues sticking to internal deadlines, but was able to complete all work to external deadline.

Joseph—gained many new financial planning skills on excel.

Josh—Improved knowledge and gained skills in market analysis and industry research.

Nathan—learnt the major differences between scale and marketing, and their importance to business function.

Benedit—improved research skills and analysis.

Maggie—how to manage internal issues and concerns. It revealed a strength in management

Illustrative Example Team 2 (Satisfactory Performers)



Each team member is obligated to complete their assigned work before stated deadline

All work must be correctly cited and referenced using reliable sources

No team member should override any group agreement regarding the assignment.

All team members should agree to meet a minimum of once to gather ideas and work on assignment

In case of a group meeting, any member who is sick and unable to attend should notify the group

The assignment will cover all the stipulations the company has requested

No team member should consciously plagiarise any work in the assignment

As a group, each member is required to foster and maintain a culture of honesty, trust and cooperation.

Task 3

Sign this group contract and ask from your instructor to sign it as well. Keep it and submit it with the assignment.

Signature

Team Member

Each reflection should contain the following information:

Description: What happened that you are going to reflect on (incident, assignment, event, theoretical idea)? What did you do? What happened? How was it handled? What was the reaction/outcome?

Before we started the assignment, we assigned ourselves to roles to be completed. We agreed to hold regular meetings and research information collectively. That allowed us to exchange ideas and structure our essay accordingly. The outcome was positive due to every group member being involved in the report. Furthermore, each person was capable of sharing their research for their particular selected role to include in the business plan and industry analysis.

Feelings: What were your reactions and feelings?

The reaction throughout the assignment was wholly positive. The assignment itself was one that we were very enthusiastic with due to the focus on the company expansion aspect as well as the opportunity to brand the company as well. The financial plan we felt was challenging but also enriching as we learned valuable information on how difficult it is to run a profitable business.

Evaluation: What was good and bad about the experience? Why did you feel that way? Were you happy with the outcome? What aspect would you like to change?

The experience proved to be successful and there were many benefits, namely researching in-depth the food and restaurant industries to gain further knowledge. We also gained more financial and marketing knowledge whilst developing a business plan. Moreover, another highlight of this assignment was the fact the practical elements in the assignment. Using an already existing company allowed us to design an assignment made to Bottega Portici with relevant details that they can utilise in their favour.

On the flipside, one negative aspect about the experience is that one of our colleagues decided to exit the group shortly into the process. The outcome at the time was unhappy but we gained a new team member in their place. If there was an aspect that we could change in retrospect, it would be preferable for our group to remain the same throughout assignment.

Analysis: What sense can you make of the situation? Bring in ideas from outside the experience to help you (both personal and theoretical). What was really going on (namely what did you *infer* that wasn't explicitly stated)? What have you learned?

Lessons Learned



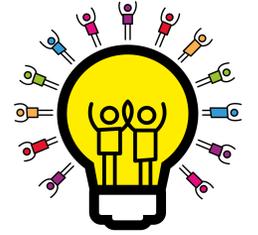
- Allow **time** in class for the development of the group contract-link it to **Employability skills**
- Make clear to the groups from the start that they **own and have the full responsibility** of the agreed contract
- When problems arise, refer the group back to their **agreed terms of working**
- At the end of the process, ask the groups to **reflect collectively on this experience**. Use the Critical Reflection tool

Lessons Learned



- Mentoring and support is key. This is a learning process for them!
- Allow yourself to make mistakes. Try a new template. Revise your approach. Experiment. This is a learning process for us, too!

Thank you for your attention!



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Group Work

- Formal learning group work involves **teams** of students that are brought together to fulfil a **designated task or assignment** which may evolve over a predefined time frame or until the assignment is graded.



CL elements



- Clearly perceived positive interdependence; Team members are obliged to rely on one another to
- achieve the goal. If any team members fail to do their part, everyone suffers consequences. Members
- need to believe that they are linked with others in a way that ensures that they all succeed together.

