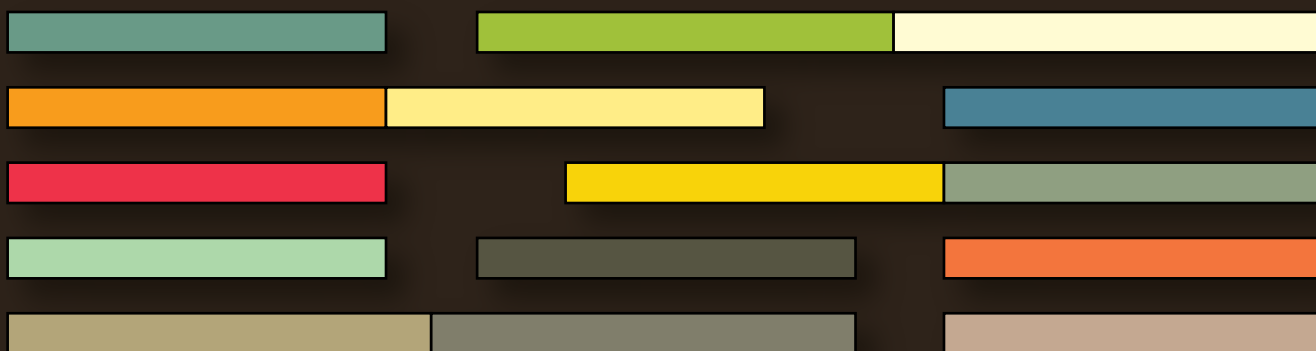


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ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS PARTICIPATION IN GROUP WORK

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Abstract

The introduction of the Bologna process into the universities led to significant changes in the teaching-learning process. Since 2010, the University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU has invested a great deal of effort and it is promoting active teaching methodologies. Among others, a cooperative and dynamic teaching-learning model (IKD model) was developed, and the Project based methodologies respond to this model. The positive aspects of the methodology are well known and they have been demonstrated by different authors in the last years. However, the difficulty arises when groupal participation of individual students has to be evaluated, as no all the students present the same degree of involvement.

This paper is focused on the need to develop an objective and fair assessments of students when participating in groupal activities. For this aim, a methodology to assess individual students contributions by the peer evaluation of the group members was developed. A case study was implemented in different degrees and subjects of the Construction Engineering area and through different evaluation conditions. The outcomes of the different casuistry allowed authors to identify the problems of the group performance so the assessment methodology allows to establish necessary actions for its improvement.

Keywords: Teaching methodologies, Higher education, Student implication, individual assessment, collaborative work.

1 INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the Bologna process into the universities led to significant changes in the teaching-learning process [1, 2]. The framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) focuses on the needs of individual students, with a new concept of the teaching-learning process. It changes the model of traditional education to Student-Centred Learning (SCL). This is a process of qualitative transformation for students in a learning environment, aimed at enhancing their autonomy and critical ability [3].

In the case of the University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU, since 2010, it has invested a great deal of effort to achieve SCL. The UPV/EHU has developed an own, cooperative, plurilingual and inclusive model named “cooperative and dynamic learning model” (IKD model) that puts its spotlight on students so that they are the owners of their learning. Hence, they are trained in a comprehensive and flexible way and they are adapted to the needs of the society.

Educating students according to IKD model requires creating new and innovative teaching and learning ways, which must be more active and cooperative (curriculum development).

The students learning must have theoretical aspects but also aspects related to the social, cultural, and economic reality of the country. The scientific literature puts in evidence that students facing real problems increase their motivation and develop core competencies [4]. This is the case of project-based learning, which may have students individual or group participation. Working in groups has become an accepted part of learning process as a consequence of the widely recognized benefits of collaborative group work for student learning. When groups work well, students learn more and produce higher quality learning outcomes. However, in this process, teachers have to cope with two issues: how to evaluate students' capacity to work in groups and how to evaluate individual work. The difficulty arises when teachers have to evaluate individual students contribution [5, 6, 7]

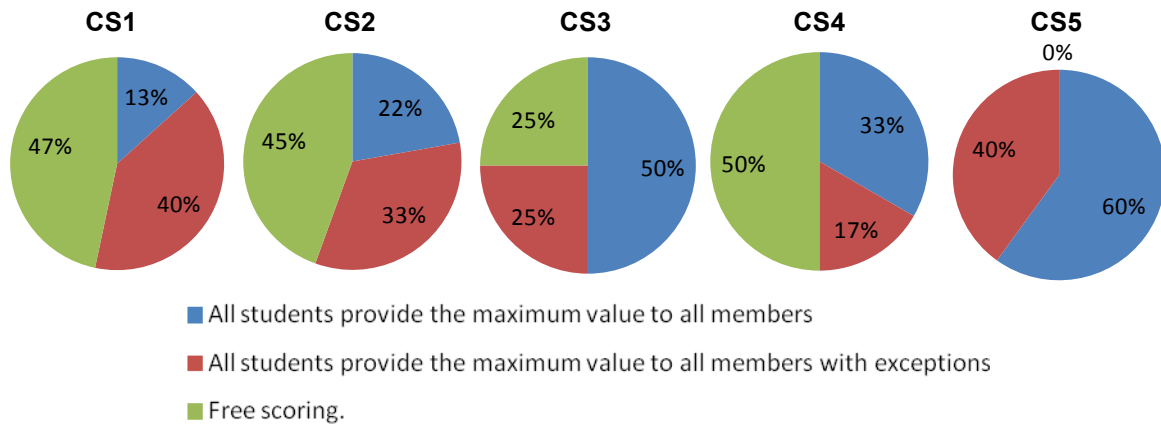


Figure 1. Results of the survey by case study.

On the other hand, students who are given a low mark gave high marks to their colleagues (72%), although in 28% of the cases they received and gave low marks. Furthermore, there is another evident tendency that students who were very demanding in their evaluation to their partners received the highest mark of the group.

Finally, if we have a look at the individual marks given to the students, the minimum mark received by a student is 1 while the minimum mark given by the evaluating student is 1.8. Considering all case studies, only three students failed the group work. The average mark of the groups was 2.8 while the minimum value was 2.5.

5 CONCLUSIONS

It is demonstrate that many students benefit from learning in groups, as long as the groups are well managed and there are clear and fair assessment requirements. In a group assignment, the students want a system that gives them every opportunity to receive a high grade that also reflects the level of contribution made by individual students. The problem arises from the way this contribution is assessed.

This paper presents the results of individual surveys completed by the students participating in a group work in order to assess their partners and the analysis of these results demonstrated that it is not easy to carry out an objective and fair assessment.

In 36% of the cases, all students provided the maximum mark to their colleagues so that they ensured all of them obtained the highest evaluation mark. Only 33% of the cases did a free scoring of their colleagues. 31% of the cases provided the highest mark to all partners with some exceptions: only one student did not received the highest mark or only one or two students did not give the highest mark to their colleagues.

Although in general the marks given to each other are high (the average value is 2.7 out of 3), there is a general tendency that remarks that students that did the most critical and demanding assessment of their colleagues, obtained the highest mark of the group. On the other side, students who obtained the lowest mark gave the highest mark to all their colleagues. This tendency could help to identify who have contributed the most and the least to the group work.

To conclude, in general, it can be observed that students try to give their colleagues a high mark; even it might seem that sometimes is agreed. Few students do a sharp evaluation and, consequently, it might appear that in few cases the peer evaluation is objective. A concluding remark is that the surveys completed at home were done with more dedication.

Future research must be oriented to match these results with the final mark of the whole subject given to the students to deepen in the profile of each student.

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