

# Should There Be More Group Work?

By Emile Rebillard

Many people debate about whether working in a collective or individually is better. Some say that individual work is better because it is easier to focus, others say that group work is better because it encourages speaking up. Although some believe that individual work is better, it is evident that group work is better considering it encourages students to speak up when in smaller groups and because it lowers stress.

Individual work is sometimes preferred over group work because you don't have much conflict, and there's no creative interference. When working in groups there can be issues with interference. Chitra Reddy states "No interference from others and extra meeting so you can focus on your work and complete it faster,"(Reddy) Not needing to meet others means that you can work on your own schedule. Group work can sometimes cause unnecessary conflicts involving creative decisions. In the article it says "You need not depend on others and also can decide things independently,"(Reddy) When making decisions about anything in the project there are many different ideas, often causing conflict.

Individual work is preferred because some students will contribute less than others in group work. They also might just contribute the bare minimum or contribute poor quality work. This

can be because they don't want to work or don't have time. In individual work students don't have to depend on others for getting a high grade or just having high quality work. That is an advantage to individual work. Other students in group work might contribute too much and dominate the group. This is an issue because other students don't do their fair share and their ideas aren't heard. In an article from the Derek Bok Center at Harvard University it says that some students talk too much, and sometimes not let others finish. "Some people might take more than their share of the discussion by talking too often, asserting superiority, telling lengthy stories, or not letting others finish. "(Group Work) This shows that some will dominate the group and need attention and take the focus away from the rest of the group. That is an issue with group work that is never present in individual work.

Group work is clearly superior because it can help students who are often quieter during class to speak up when they are in a smaller group of peers. They might not speak up because they are afraid they will get something wrong and the whole class will know. Another reason they might not speak up is they are embarrassed about what they think. In an article from Harvard it states that students who have problems speaking up in front of the whole class might speak more when they are in a smaller group of peers. "Students who have difficulty talking in class may speak in a small group,"(Group Work) This shows that the students who are quiet during class will probably speak up in a smaller group. This might be because the students will become closer and feel more comfortable with each other, or because they don't want the whole class to hear what they think. When students speak more they will also develop very important communication skills. In an article from the Elbery Center at Carnegie Mellon University it says that students

will develop in relation to the other students. “Develop their own voice and perspectives in relation to peers,”(What are the benefits of group work?) This shows how working in a group will help students learn how to speak in a relevant way to the task.

Group work has many benefits. One of which is it can lower anxiety and/or stress. This is most likely because students don't have to do as much and know they can get help from others if they need it. Another reason is they might not be as worried about the quality of the work because if there is a mistake another student in the group might catch the mistake and point it out to them so they can fix it. According to an article from Royal Roads University group work can lower the level of stress. “Lower levels of anxiety and stress,”(Students benefit from learning in groups) This can be very beneficial for not only the student but the students they work with because that student will be more focused on the project. If a student works on their own on a project it can sometimes be overwhelming and cause unnecessary stress when working in a group would allow the student to not be stressed because the student doesn't have to do every aspect of the project. The project might also be too large for one person to do every part. In an article from the Derek Bok center it states “giving students a chance to work on a project that is too large or complex for an individual,”(Group Work) under the section titled “Some reasons to ask students to work in groups” This is showing how the group work can help take the load of students by dividing the work between the members of the group instead of only one student.

By working in groups students can learn important skills. Some of these include communication, conflict management, and leadership. These skills are very useful and often necessary in jobs. If

students work individually then they might not learn these skills. In an article from Royal Roads University it states “Students are encouraged and helped to develop and practice team skills such as leadership, communication, and conflict management.” (Students benefit from learning in groups) This is showing how those skills are developed and practiced during group projects. If students were to work individually then when conflicts come up in a workplace the individual might struggle more than if they had done more group work.

People say that individual work is better than group work. That is simply incorrect, individual work is subpar when compared to group work. This is because group work can allow students to speak up if they are quiet, lower stress, and learn important skills that are useful in many positions. The debate involving individual and group work will last for a very long time as more benefits for both sides are discovered, even though group work is clearly superior and those who say otherwise are incorrect.

## Citations:

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