

Na Zuo, Norton School Teaching Series Presentations

April 12, 2019

McClelland Park Room 402

An Authentic Learning Approach to Group Assignments: An Analysis of Student Attitudes, Na Zuo,  
Department of Agricultural Education

Watch - <https://youtu.be/qa3yo0G2PH8>

Handouts below:

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## The Project Manager / Private Contractor Approach to Group Assignments<sup>1</sup>

Roger Brown, Na Zuo, Jordan Shockley, Steve Buck

### Rules and Boundaries for the Basic PM / PC Approach

#### Group Formation

- (1) The instructor is the CEO, and the CEO has final say about all compensation (grades).
- (2) For this group project, students will be either a project manager (PM) or a private contractor (PC).
- (3) PMs are group leaders. They have group management skills. In this class, there will be eight PMs.
- (4) PCs are technical experts that have specialized skills. In this class, there will be 24 PCs.
- (5) You and your peers together will determine whether you are a PM or a PC. All students will share a one-page resume with and give a one-minute speech in front of their peers during the first week of the term. All students will use this information to rank the eight students they want to be PMs.
- (6) The CEO (instructor) will sum each student's rankings. The eight students who receive the highest overall ranks will be PMs for this project. All other students will be PCs.
- (7) The CEO will announce each student's role. At that time, PMs must each recruit three PCs from the remaining students. Every PC must join a group with two other PCs and one PM.

#### Individual Grading

- (1) As groups form, the CEO will assign each a group project to complete by a specific due date.
- (2) After the due date, the CEO will assign each group an overall project grade (up to 100%). The CEO will also give each PM +10% bonus credit for leading a group.
- (3) PMs must then recommend individual grades (up to 100%) for each PC in their group with the constraint that, exclusive of any bonus points, the average grade for all PCs in a group must equal the overall group project grade assigned to by the CEO.
- (4) Next, the PM must provide written justification to the CEO for each grade assigned and indicate how much bonus credit, if any, the PM wishes to share with each PC.
- (5) The CEO will then tabulate a final project grade (up to 100%) for each student based on grade recommendations from the group's PMs.
- (6) Finally, all PCs must rate their PM (up to 100%) and provide written justification to the CEO for their rating. PM ratings do not affect the PM's grade, but the CEO may use the PM's ratings to determine if that student is eligibility to serve as a PM for future projects.

#### Meetings Scheduling

- (1) The CEO recognizes that PMs and PCs have other job duties (school work) and that PMs and PCs do some of their work at the main office (in class) and some of their work remotely from their home offices (e.g., library).
- (2) The CEO usually conducts trainings (lectures) and assessments at the main office (in class) when most employees (students) are gathered together. However, as noted in the employee handbook (syllabus), the CEO has moved some trainings online to allow PMs and PCs to work on their group projects occasionally at the main office (in class). This accommodation requires PMs and PCs to access some of their main office trainings (lectures) online from their home offices instead.
- (3) PMs and PCs should expect to spend significant additional time working at their home offices preparing for their group meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> The material is part of a teaching commentary in submission for publication.