

Major Group Work Assignments in the Classroom

OCASA Conference
June 27th, 2012



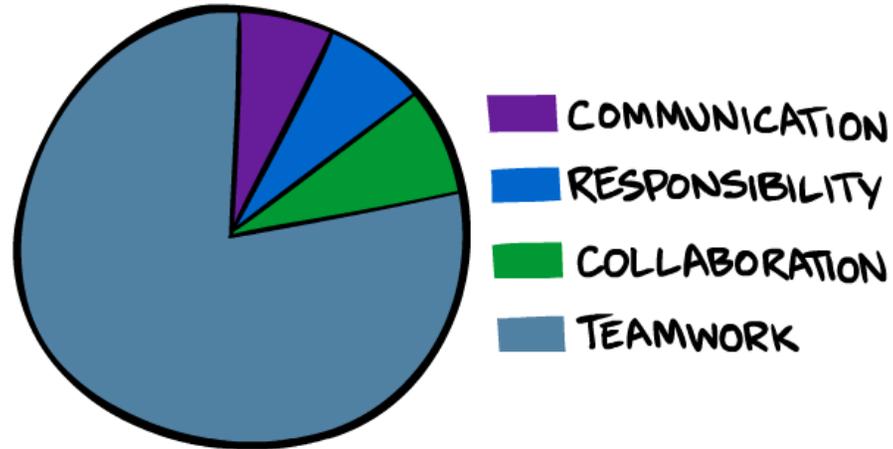
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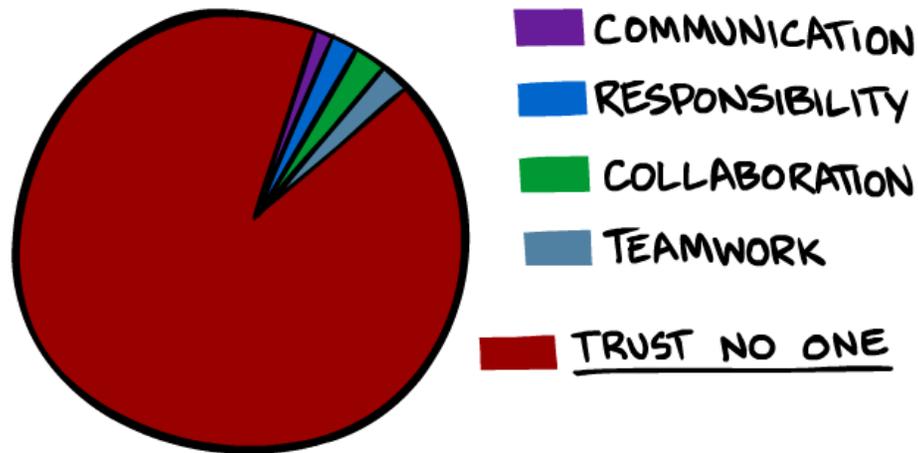
Workshop Objectives

- 1) Gain an understanding of the benefits and risks of implementing major group work assignments into curriculum.
- 2) Comprehend the literature review and methodology used in this study.
- 3) Acknowledge that group work assignments are utilized in the majority of post-secondary curriculums.
- 4) To become aware of many tools and resources recommended to create a successful group work environment.
- 5) Gain knowledge of professional development opportunities available for faculty.
- 6) Comprehend that administrators have a role in supporting faculty facilitating group work assignments.

WHAT GROUP PROJECTS ARE SUPPOSED TO TEACH YOU



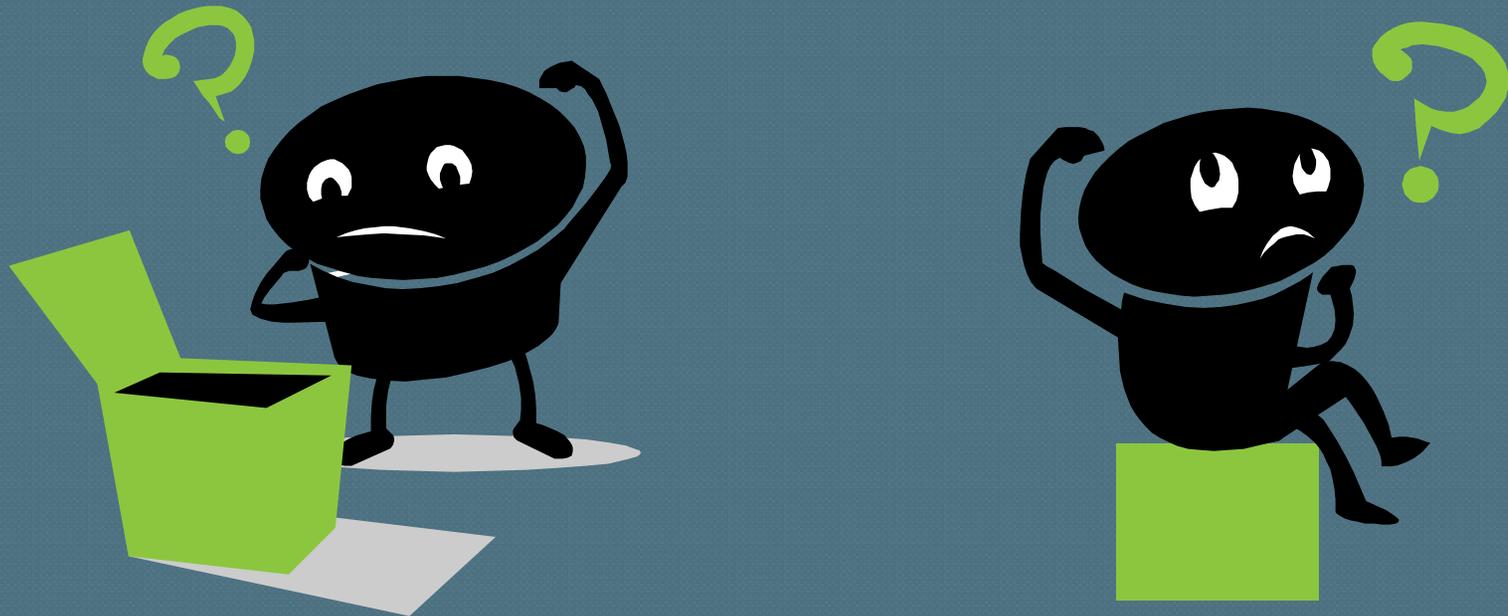
WHAT GROUP PROJECTS TAUGHT ME



“The key skills needed to improve careers are oral communication, written communication, problem solving techniques, motivating and managing others, and setting personal and organizational goals”.

(Zekeri, 2004)

Purpose of the study



Hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1: Faculty recognize and support the importance of group work within the classroom.
- Hypothesis 2: The majority of faculty use a form of major group work.
- Hypothesis 3: Faculty use a variety of tools and resources when implementing group work.
- Hypothesis 4: Faculty comprehend that they have a major role in the outcomes of major group work.
- Hypothesis 5: Faculty know that they have access to professional development designed on making group work an effective and successful environment.
- Hypothesis 6: Faculty who use group work in the classroom would attend professional development sessions on group work.

Minimal communication can have a profound effect in team work



Reflection exercise

Take a few minutes and reflect on a group work experience that was successful and one that was unsuccessful.

Consider the following factors:

Groups determined or chosen

Group size

Group preparedness

Successes and challenges

Experiences



Literature review

30 academic journals

Timespan – 1987-2010

No one study fits all



Methodology

- Surveyed approximately 500 full-time and contract faculty at Durham College in September 2010
- Return rate was 105/500 or 21%

Questions included:

- participant's current level of experience with major group work assignments
- different methods used for determining groups
- techniques used prior to release of assignment
- level of faculty/student interaction during process
- techniques used at the end of assignment
- faculty perceptions of their involvement and skills required in process

Limitations of study

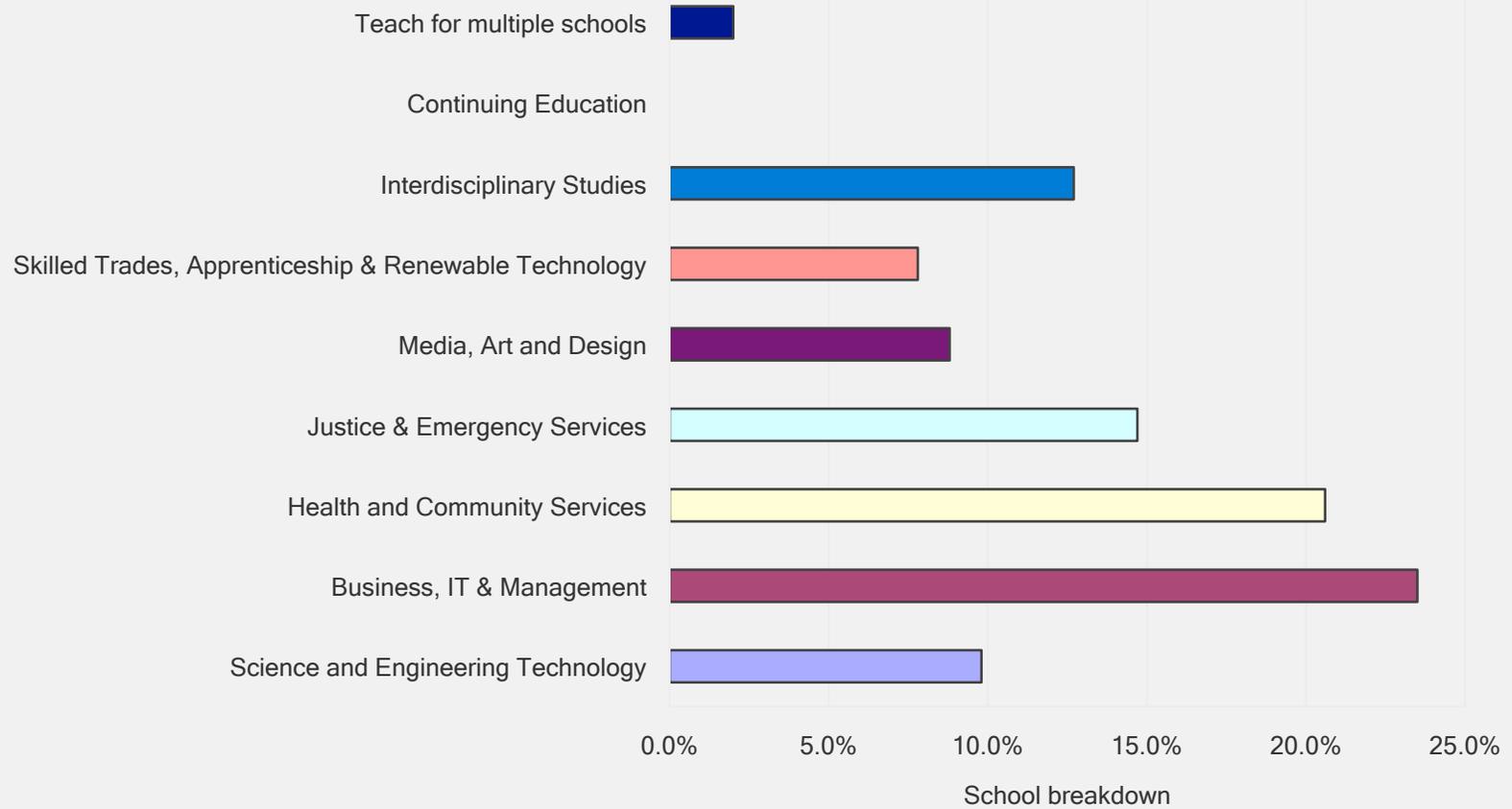
Survey timing

Survey delivery

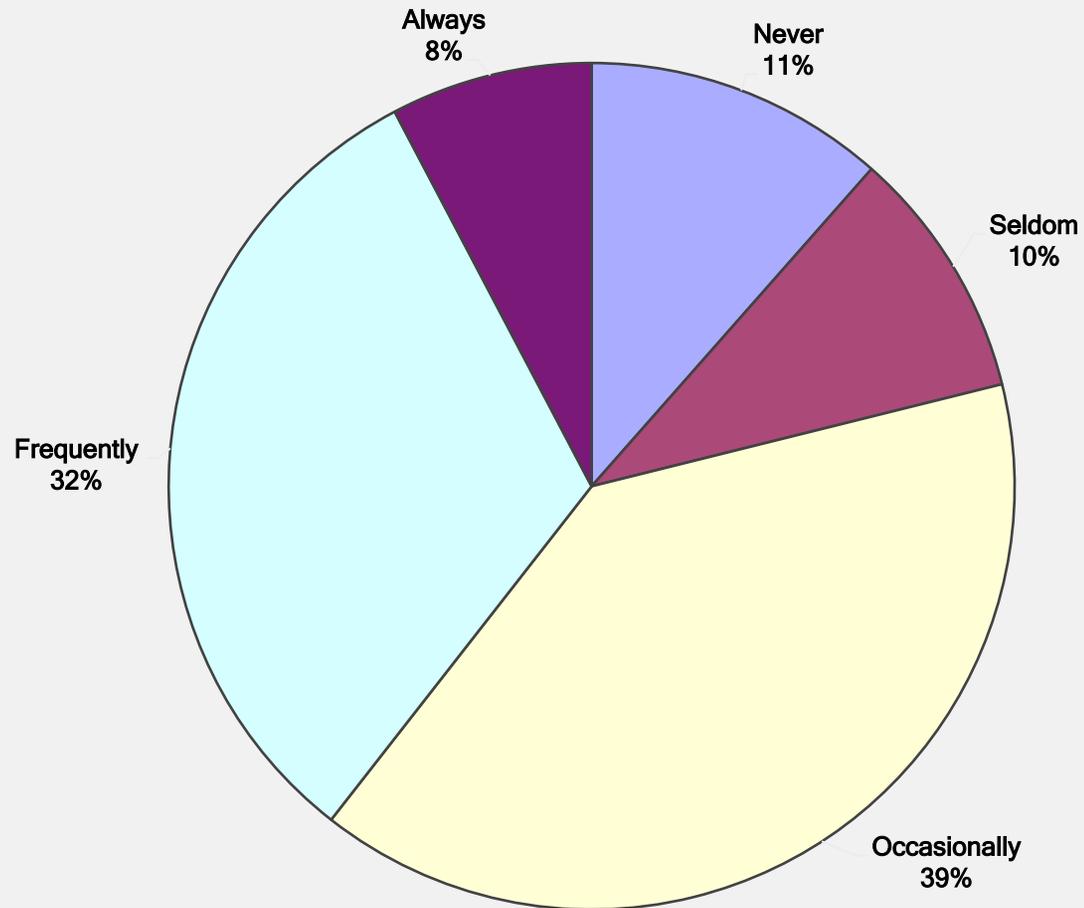
Lack of student data



School representation



Frequency faculty use major group work assignments



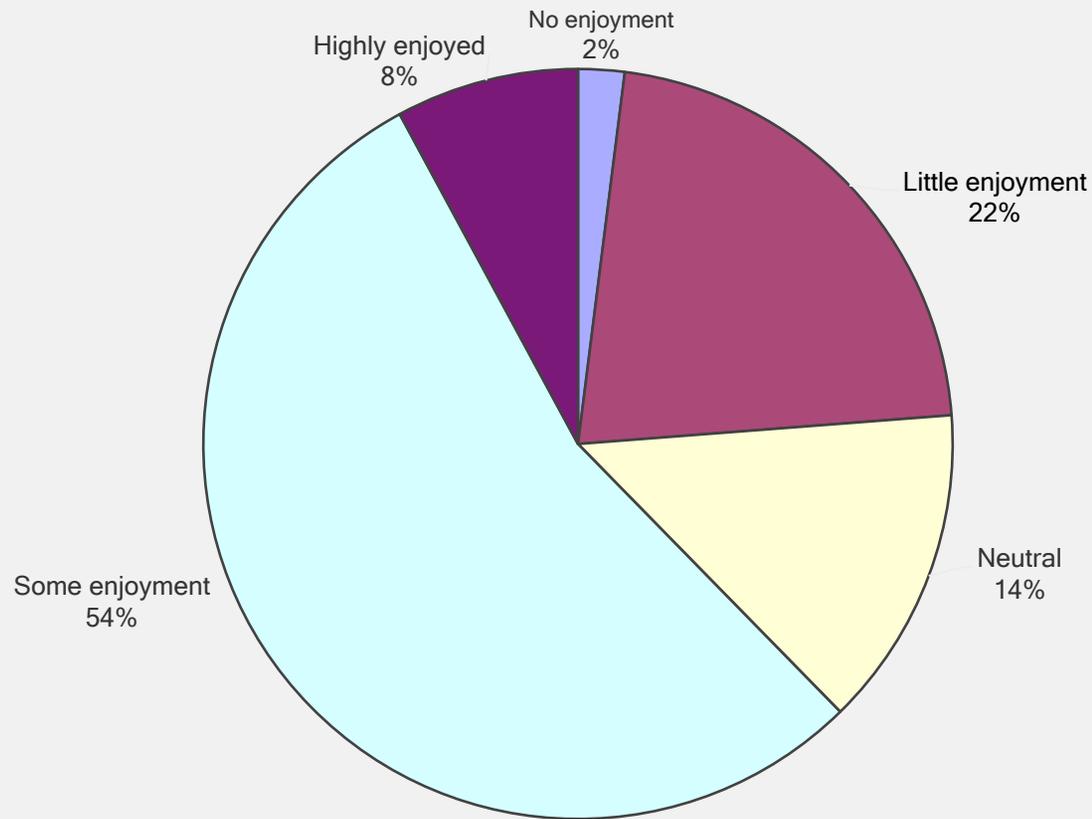
Recommendations to enhance major group work assignments



1. Illustrate the benefits of group work to students
2. Allow students to form their own groups
3. Appropriate group sizes relative to the assignment
4. Set clear objectives and goals
5. Design team building activities
6. Provide class time for group work
7. Formulate self and peer feedback into evaluation
8. Develop faculty group work skills
9. Faculty role as a facilitator
10. Professional development opportunities for faculty
11. Further research opportunities

1) Illustrate the benefits of group work to students

Student's enjoyment level

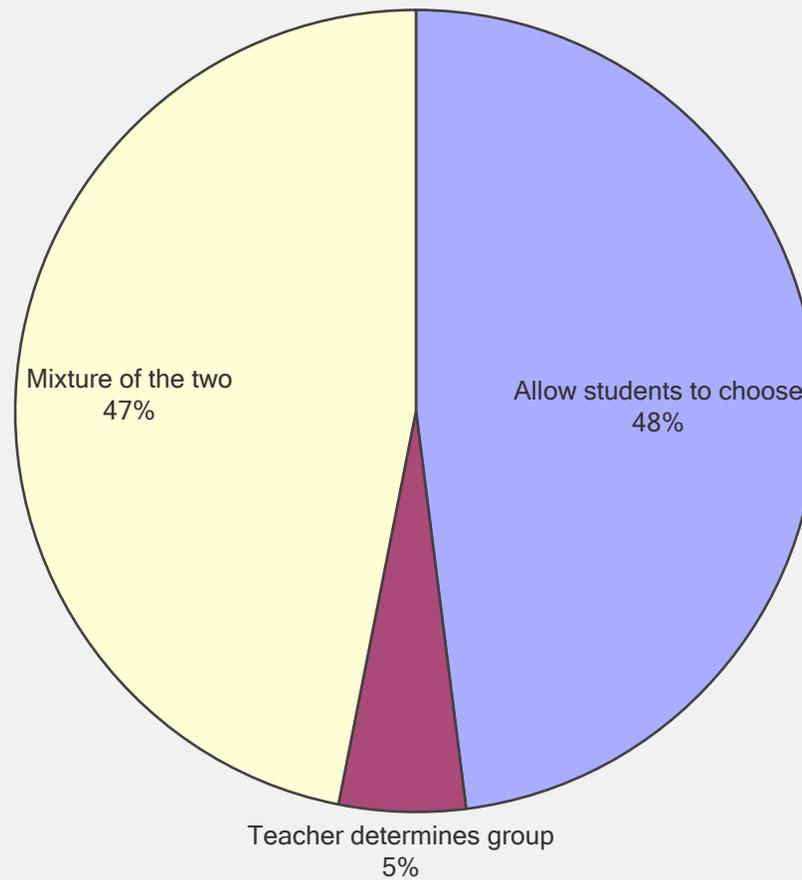


Major group work assignments in the classroom

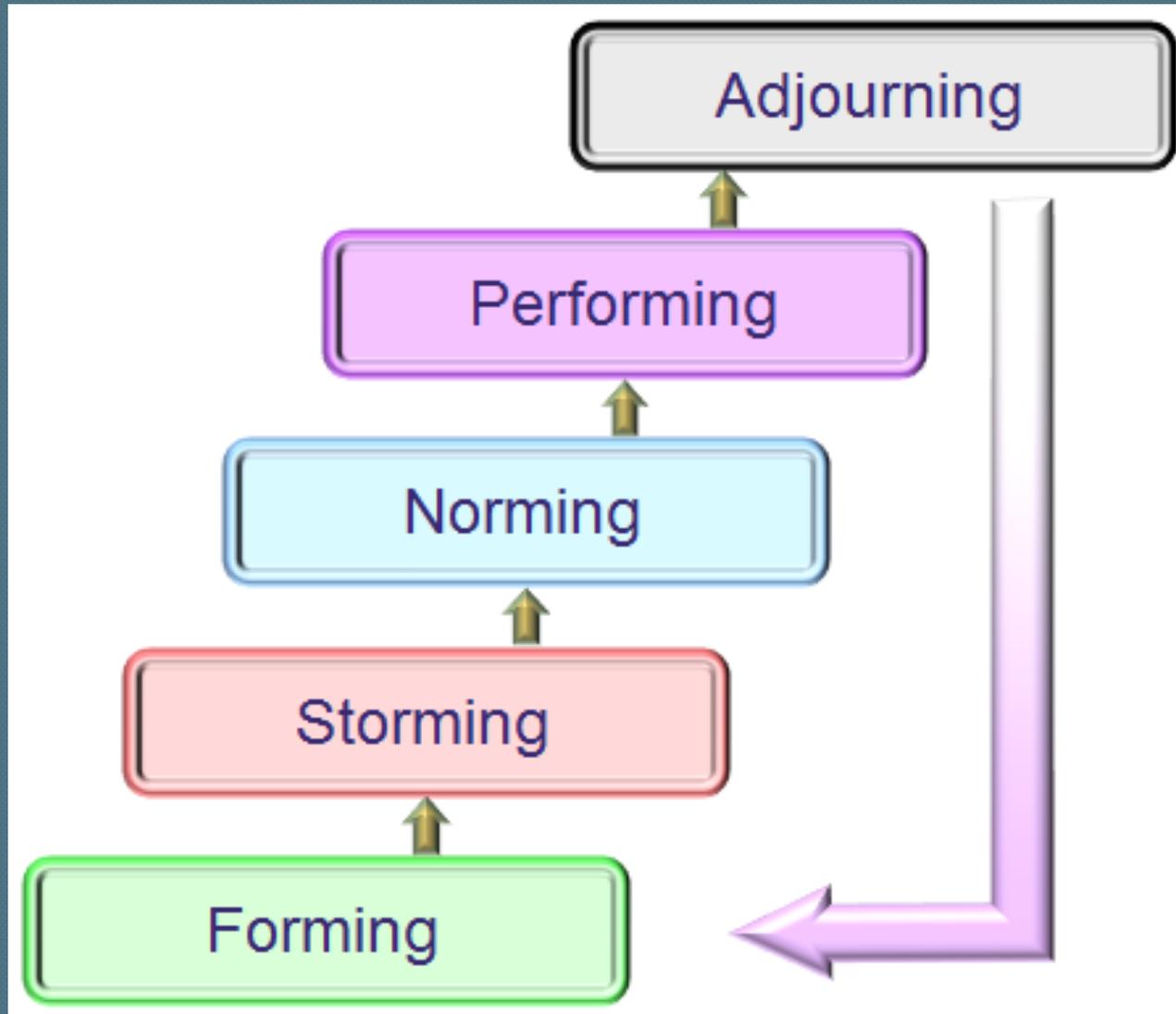
Benefits	Risks
Networking and social relationships	Personality conflicts
Shared workload	Inequitable distribution of work
Increased access to ideas	Lack of individual accountability
Soft skills – communication, problem solving, decision making, negotiation, leadership	Lack of team cohesiveness
Employability skills	Social loafers/free riding/sucker effect behaviours
Goal setting knowledge	Lack of time to meet with group members

2) Allow students to form their own groups

Breakdown of group composition

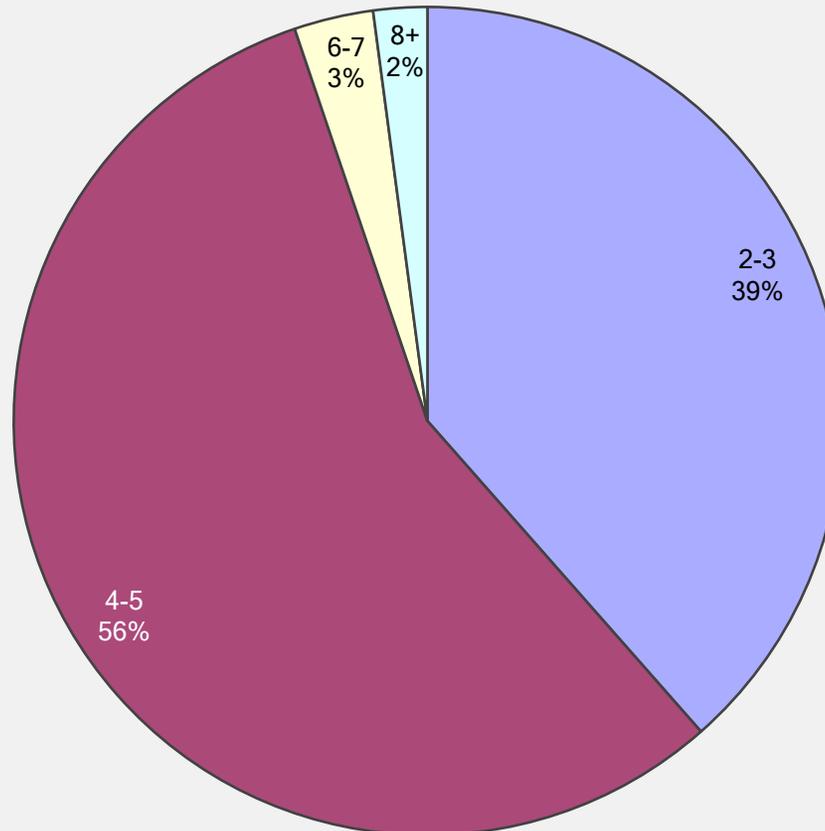


Tuckman model of group development



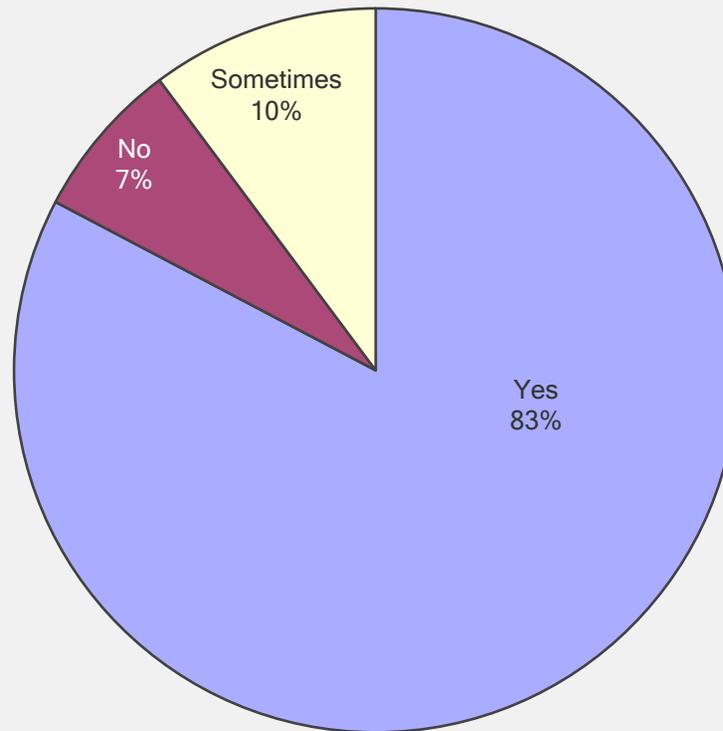
3) Appropriate group sizes relative to the assignment

Size of groups



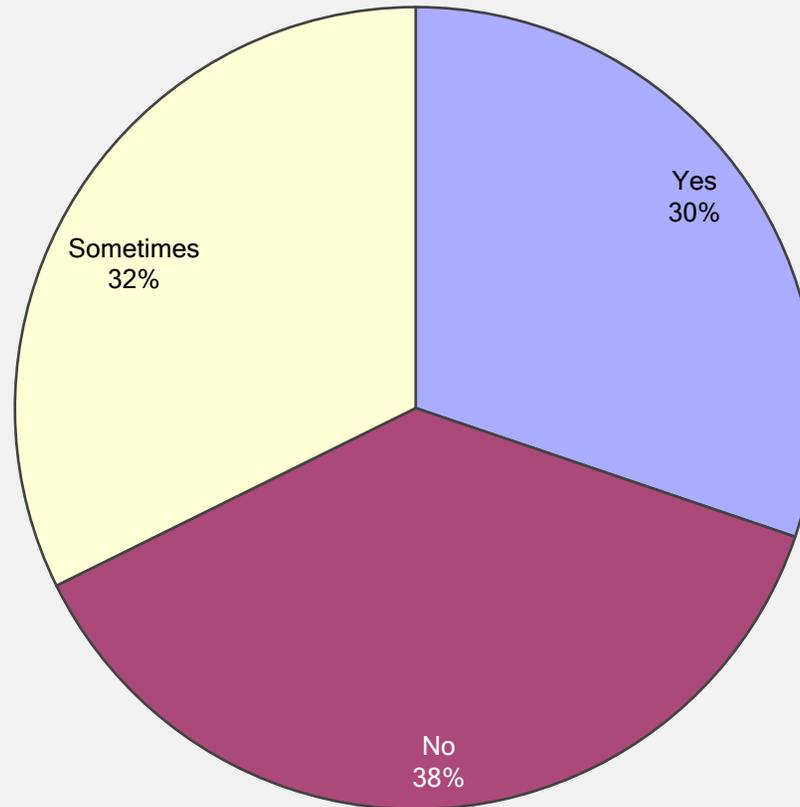
4) Set clear objectives and goals

Grading rubrics



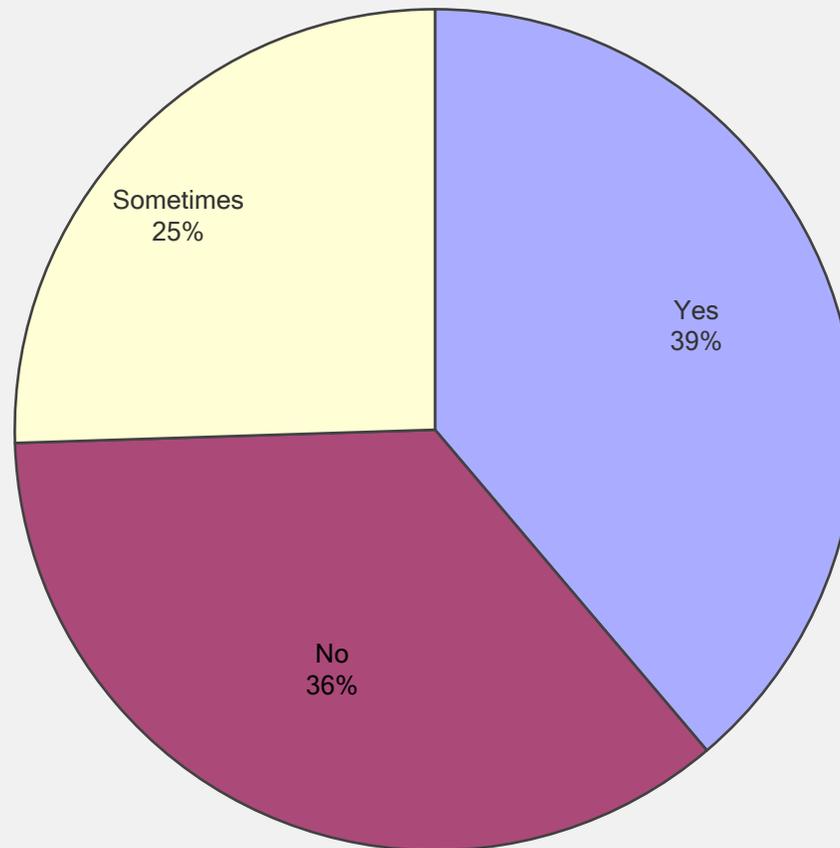
5) Design team building activities

Ice Breakers

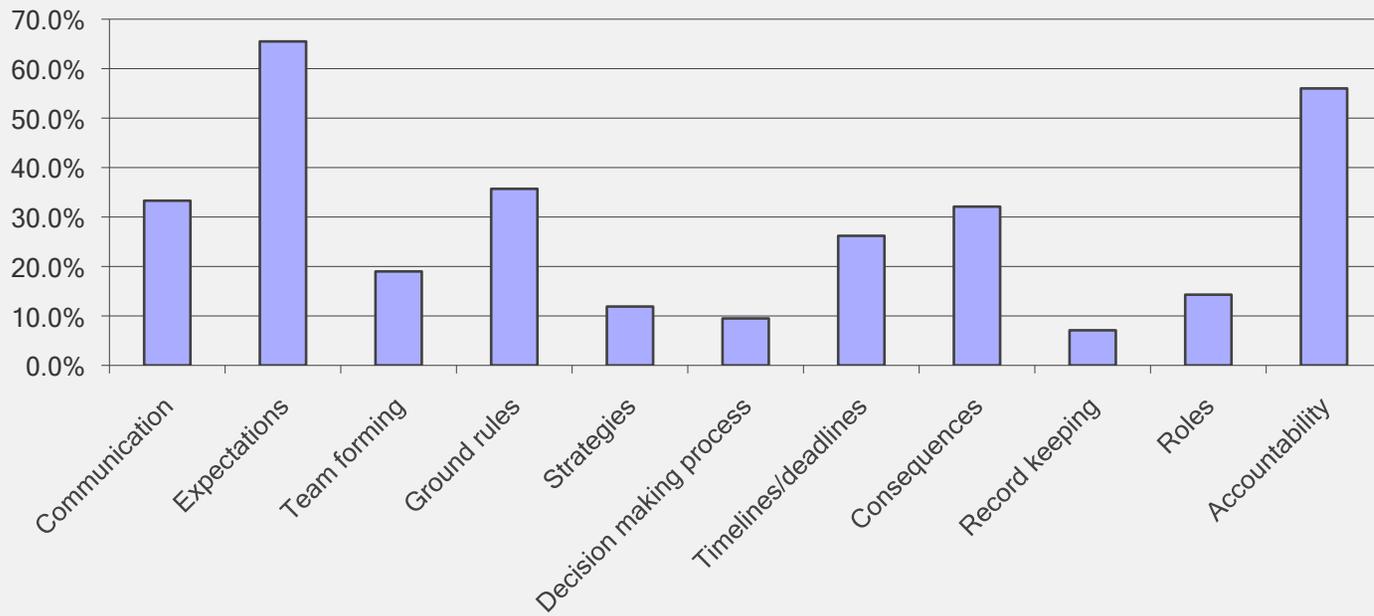


Group contracts

Group contracts

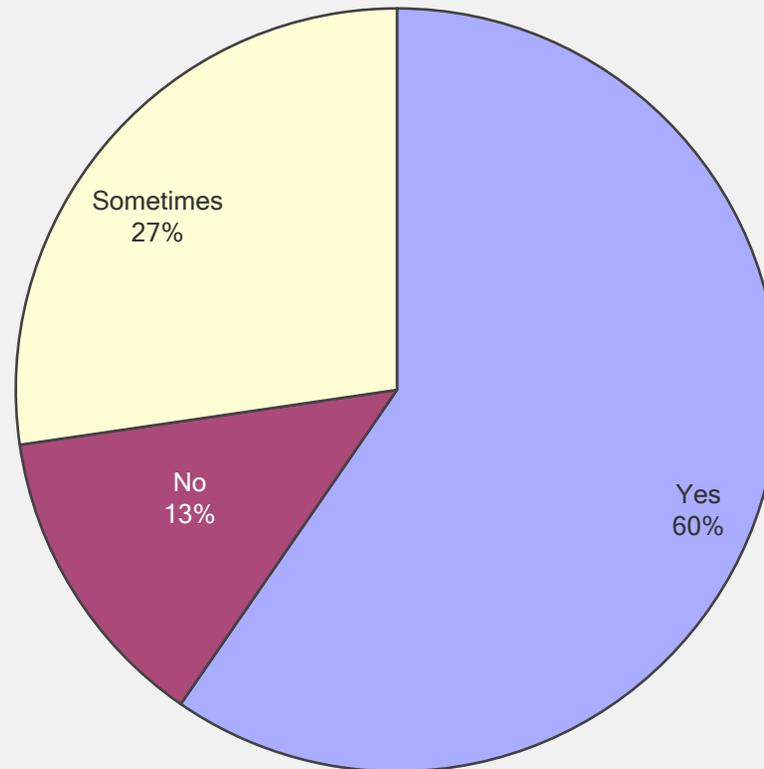


Rationale for using a group contract (pick top three answers)



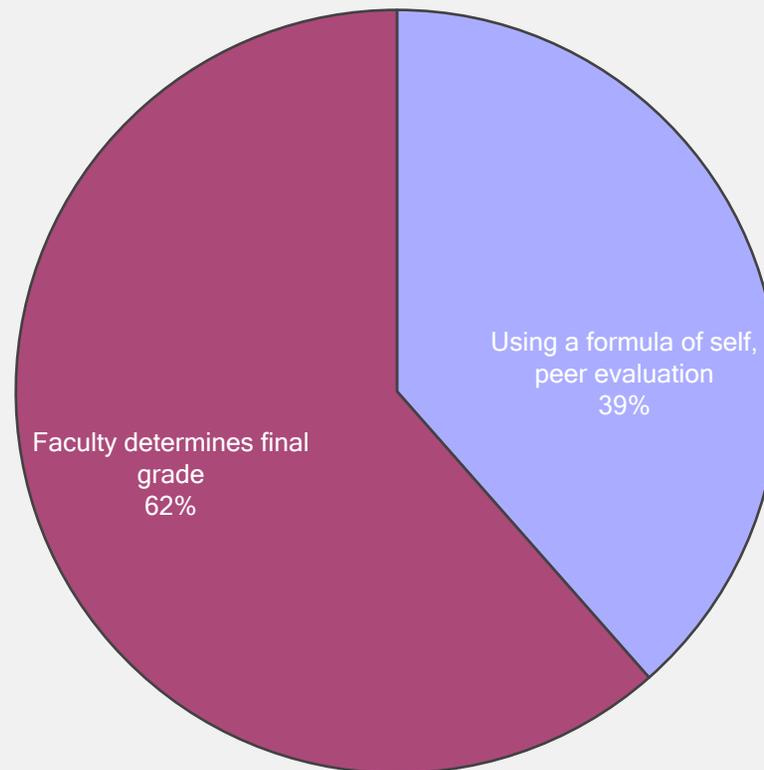
6) Provide class time for group work

Classroom time



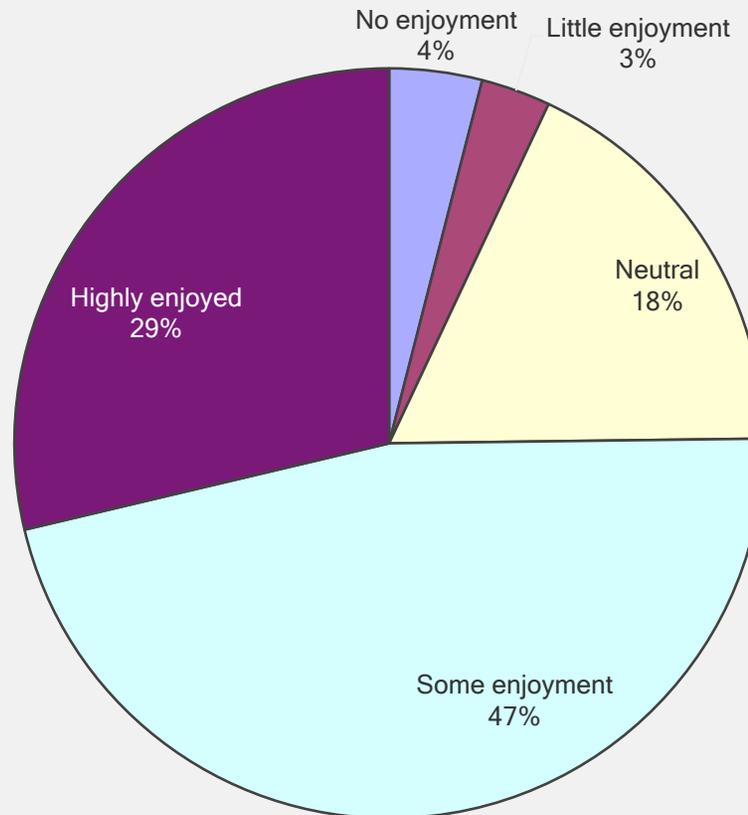
7) Formulate self and peer feedback into evaluation

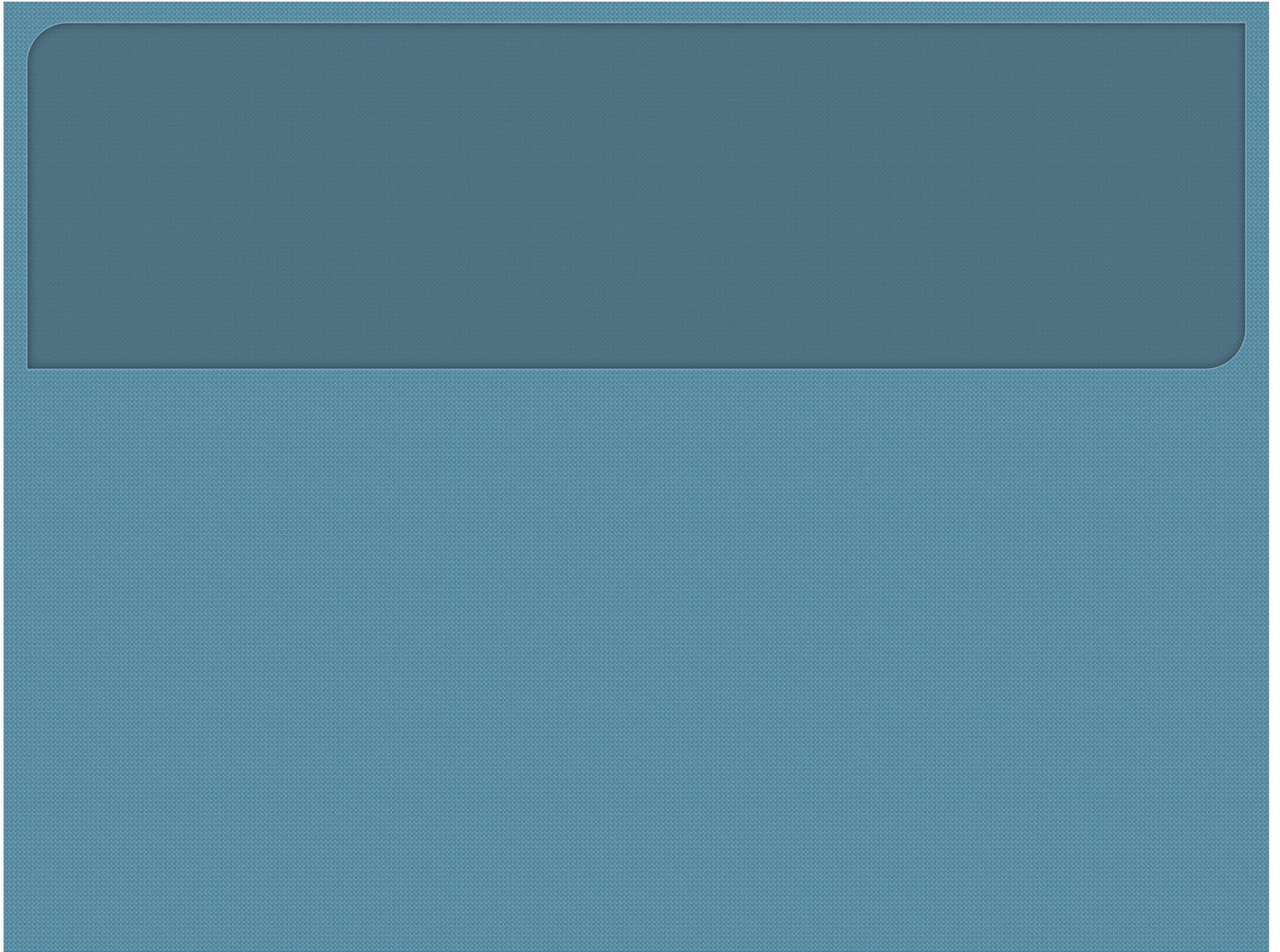
Weighing feedback

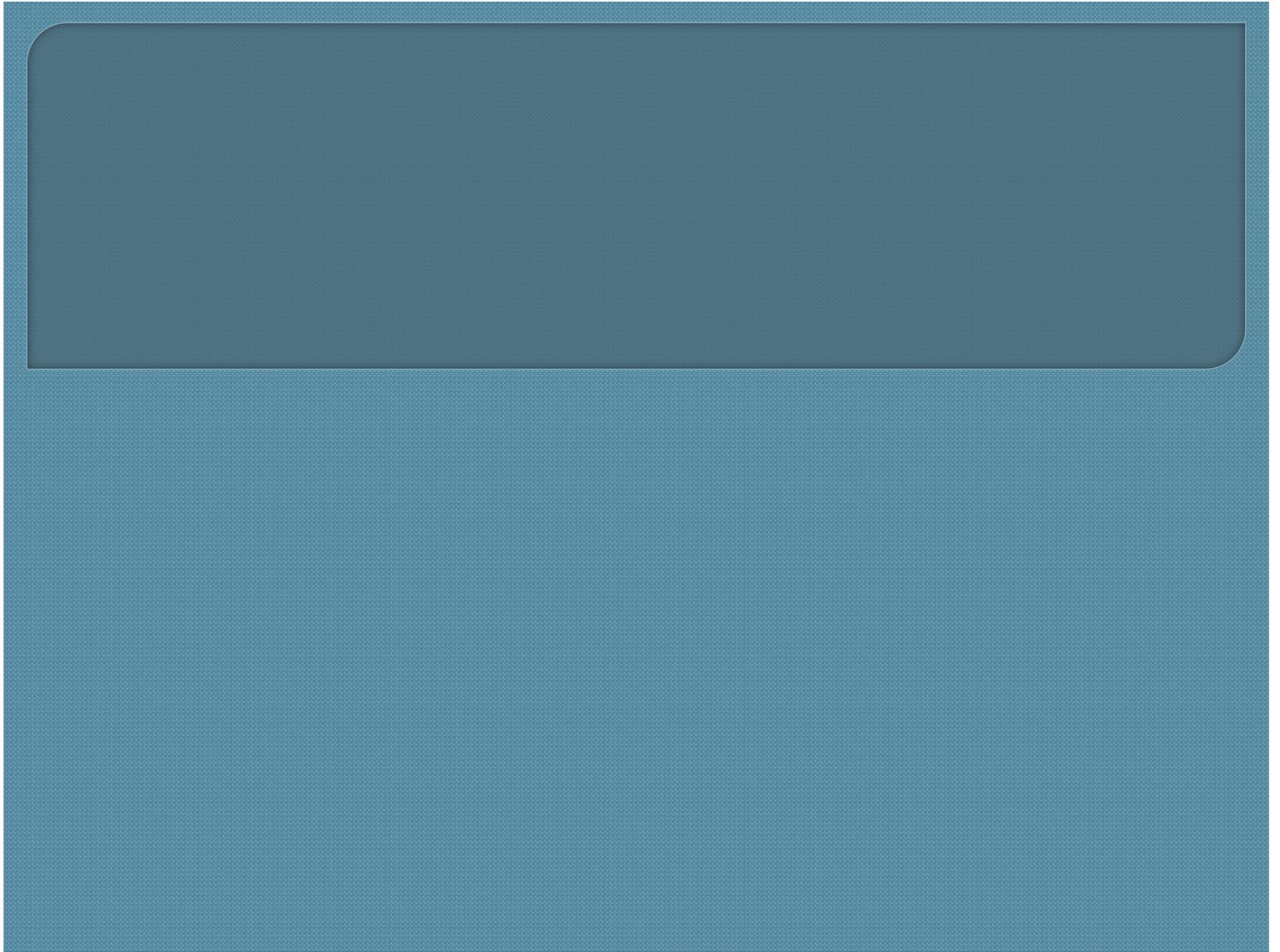


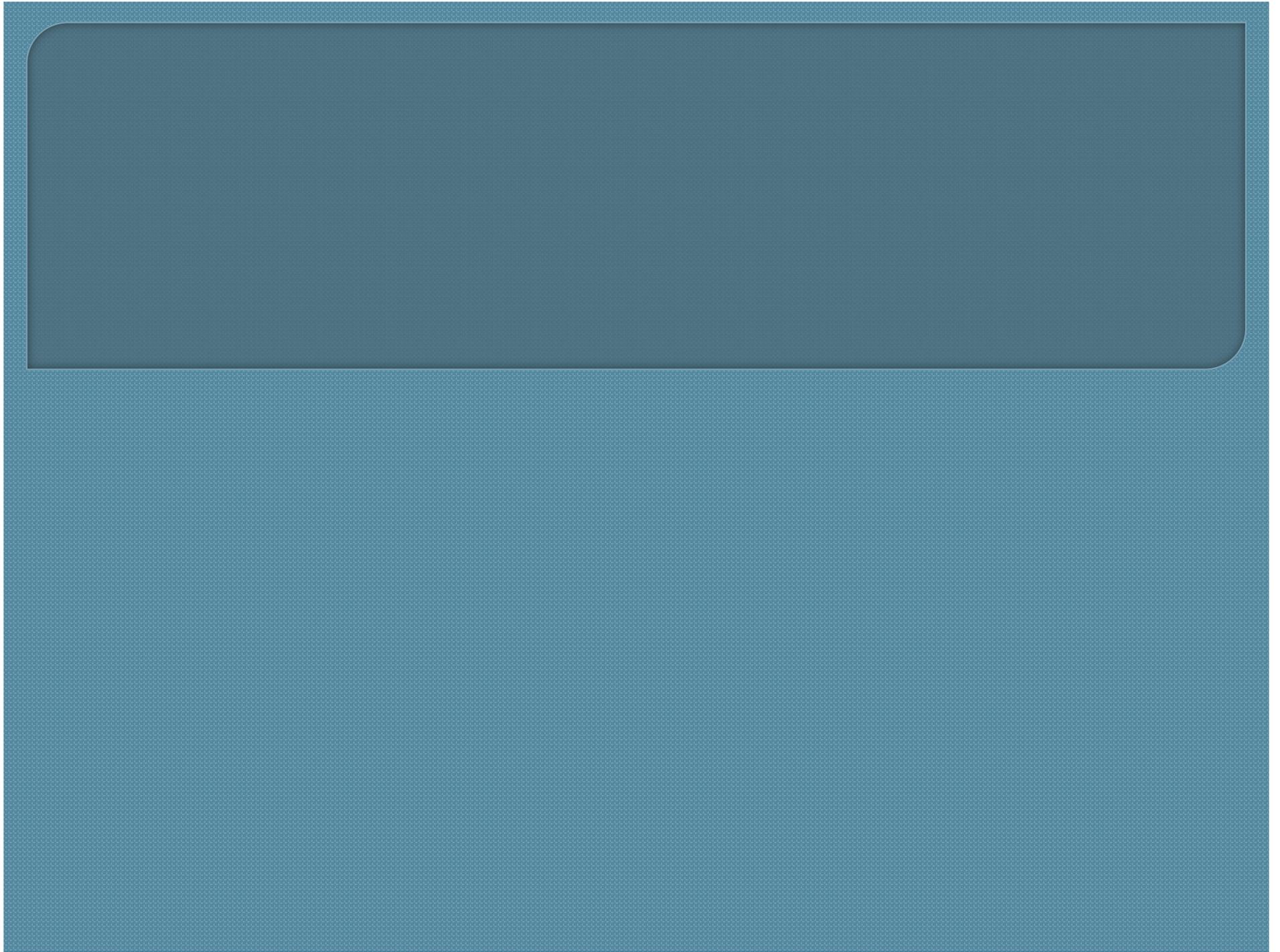
8) Develop faculty group work skills

Faculty level of enjoyment



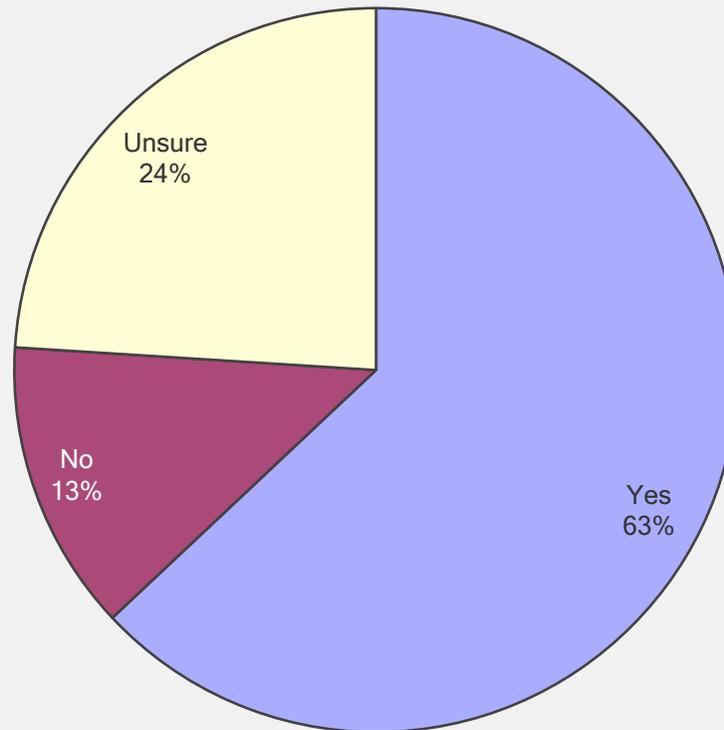




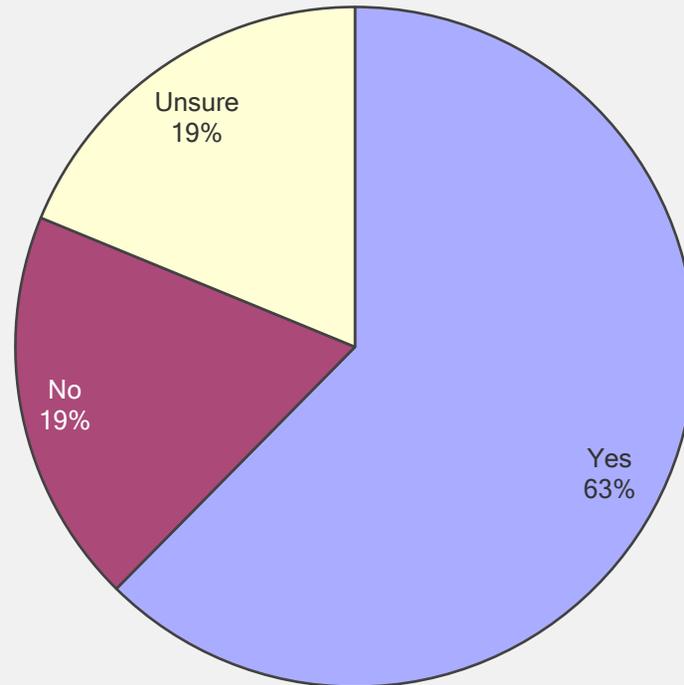


10) Professional development opportunities for faculty

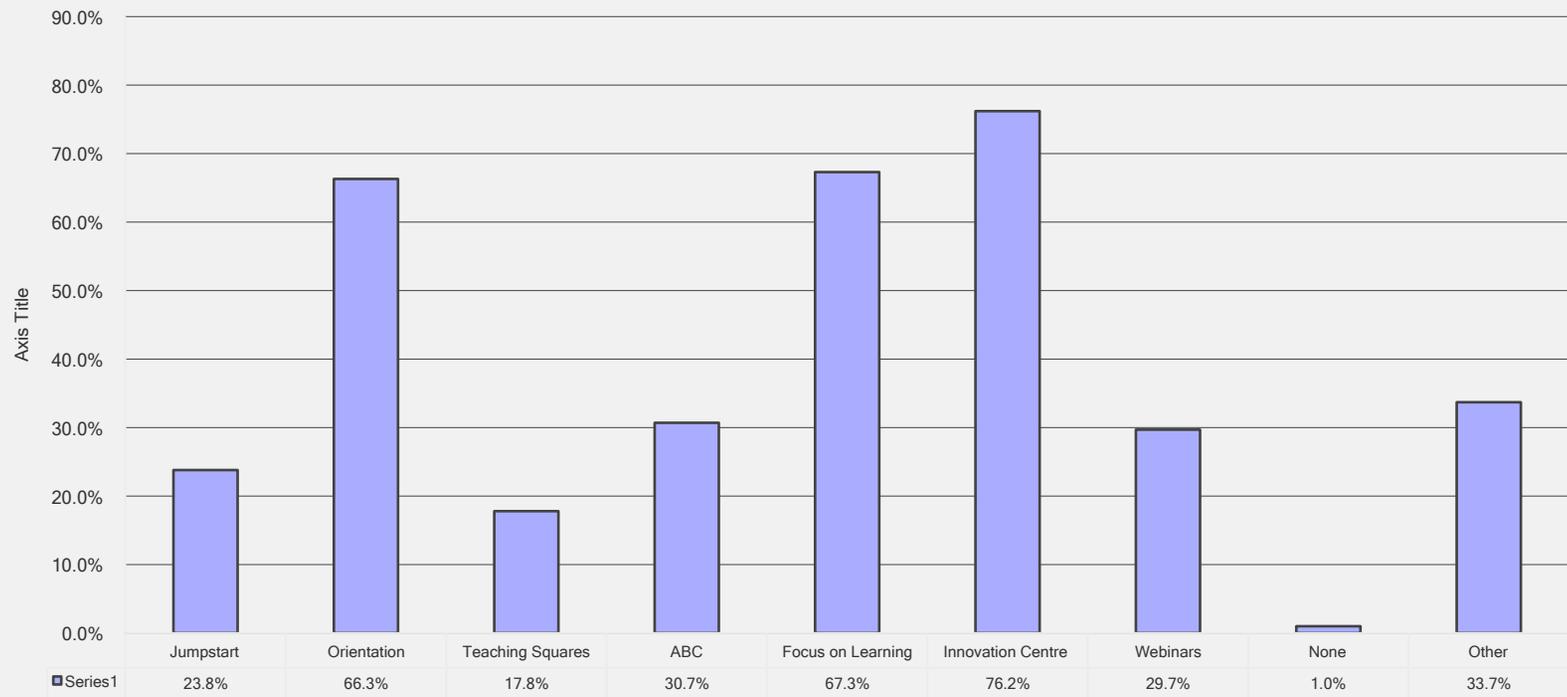
Access to professional development



Faculty interest in attending a professional development session on group work



Additional professional development experience (check all that apply)



Faculty Cyber Connections

Making the Most of Group Work

Course Description: Employers always list "teamwork skills" high on their lists of requirements for our graduates. How can we help our students gain these important skills without needing a license in refereeing? This cyber course will provide tips and tools for setting up, managing, and assessing student groups in ways that students will perceive as fair and manageable.

Learning Outcomes - At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Select group configurations according to specific needs
- Support student learning throughout group work stages
- forming, storming, norming, performing
- Assess the process of group work
- Design a group work assignment

Ellis (1990) concludes, “[n]ot surprising, in those schools where principals took an active role in promoting the use of cooperative learning, more teachers acquired the strategy, and now use it regularly”.

What else is out there to assist faculty
with group work?



Suggestions for additional professional development support

Mentoring

Program team discussions

Online discussion boards/list serves

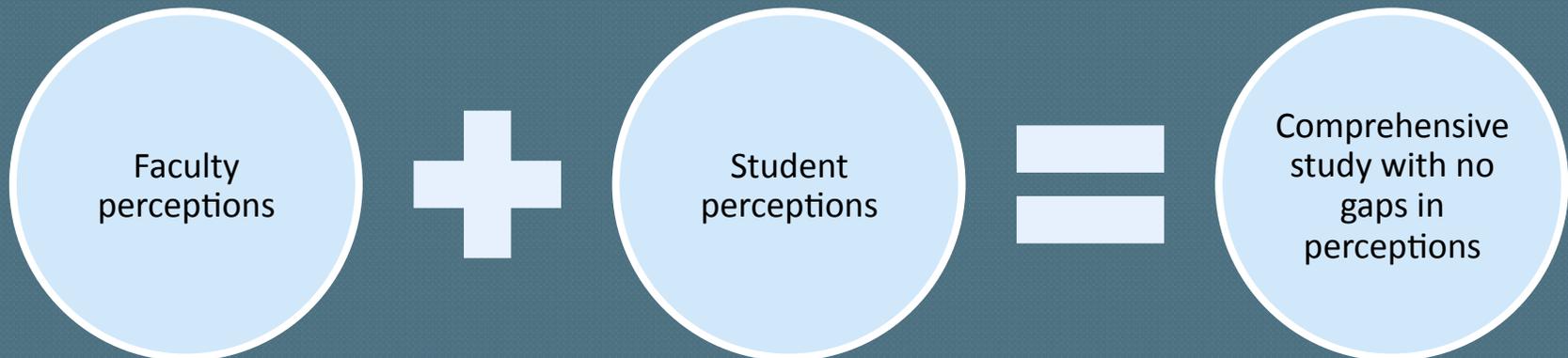
Peer coaching

Classroom observations

Mediation training

Workshops/webinars

11) Further research opportunities



Things I have learned through this experience

One size does not fit all

External factors may impact the group work process

Faculty are engaged in research and willing to learn or enhance their skills

Research what interests you





Questions