

The Impact of Behaving Cooperatively and Withholding Effort in Team-Based Learning”

Susan Brudvig, Indiana University East
Jacqueline M. Zalewski, West Chester University of Pennsylvania

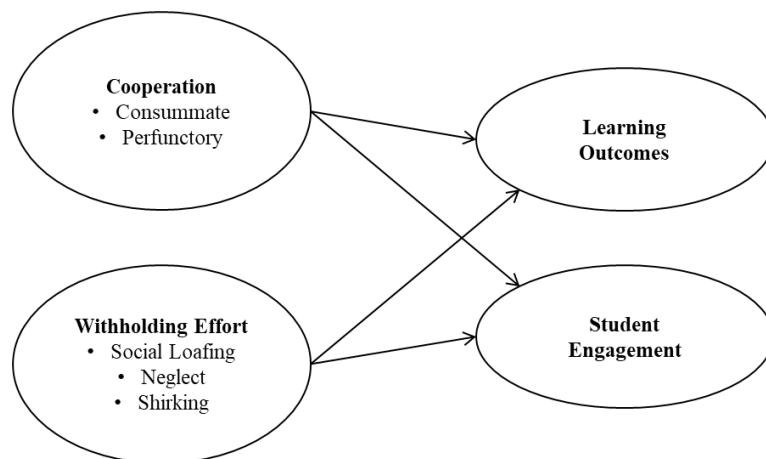
Abstract

In our position paper, we assert that students’ own behaviors, specifically whether they behave cooperatively or withhold effort, can help faculty understand outcomes of team-based learning. Our conceptualization adds to the existing literature which suggests that teaching activities and team processes impact outcomes of team-based learning.

Position Paper

Teamwork often is a cornerstone of a business education because it is considered an essential professional skill (Riebe, Girardi, & Whitsed, 2016). Moreover, team-based learning (TBL) results in increased student engagement and better learning outcomes (e.g., Chad, 2012; Huggins & Stamatel, 2015; Jacobson, 2011). There is a considerable body of evidence which suggests that pedagogical processes, such as group charters or group assignment, enhance student success and positive experiences in TBL (e.g., Bacon, Stewart, & Anderson, 2001; Harding, 2017; Paretti, Layton, Laguette, & Speegle, 2011). What is less clear in the literature is the degree to which TBL outcomes are associated with students’ perceptions of their own behaviors, rather than students’ perceptions of their teammates’ behaviors (e.g., Loughry, Ohland, & Woehr, 2014). Rather focus on the mechanisms used to encourage student behaviors (e.g., group contracts, syllabi clauses, group assignment, etc.) or to assess students’ perceptions of other students, we are interested in better understanding the impact of students’ own behavior on teamwork outcomes.

We propose that cooperative behavior and withholding effort impact two TBL outcomes – perceived learning outcomes and student engagement. (See Figure.) We measure students’ perceived learning outcomes with seven items adapted from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), as reported in Huggins & Stamatel (2015). We measure student engagement with six items adapted from Johnson (1981), Moore (1989), and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), as reported in Huggins & Stamatel (2015).



We propose that TBL outcomes are associated with students' perceptions of their own cooperative behavior, which can be conceptualized as consummate or perfunctory. Consummate cooperation is working toward a mutual end by responding flexibly and sharing, and it is not enforced through contract, such as a group charter (Kay, 1995). Consummate cooperation is more important when participants work together to produce a single outcome, such as a paper or an innovation (Ouchi, 1980). We operationalize consummate cooperation with a four-item scale which measures students' extra-role behaviors (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). On the other hand, perfunctory cooperation is effort which is minimally required, and it can be imposed through agreement, such through a group charter or a syllabus (Williamson, Wachter, & Harris, 1975). It is effort that is sufficient to avoid sanctions or reprimands but may not fully utilize participants' skill or knowledge. We operationalize perfunctory cooperation with a four-item scale which measures students' in-role behaviors (Williams & Anderson, 1991).

We also propose that TBL outcomes are associated with students' perceptions of their own behavior, specifically three forms of withholding effort that are deliberate actions to lower contribution (Kidwell & Valentine, 2009). First, we identify social loafing as a form of withholding effort in teams. Social loafing occurs when an individual fails to contribute a fair share and allows others to pick up the slack (Aggarwal & O'Brien, 2008). In contrast, free-riding is social loafing with benefits (Bennett & Naumann, 2004), such as the receipt of a group grade. Because our focus is on individual behavior, rather than the result of the behavior, we focus on social loafing as a form of withholding effort in a team setting. We measure social loafing with a six-item scale adapted from Kidwell & Robie (2003) and Lin & Huang (2009). A second form of withholding effort is neglect, which is a withdrawal from team-based activities. We measure neglect with a six-item scale adapted from Kidwell & Robie (2003) and Lin & Huang (2009). A third form of withholding effort is shirking, which is holding back a full effort. Shirking focuses on individual contribution of effort to a task, and it can be distinguished from social loafing which is holding back effort toward a group task (Kidwell & Robie, 2003). We measure shirking with four items adapted from the literature (Judge & Chandler, 1990; Kidwell & Valentine, 2009; Pfaff & Huddleston, 2003). These three phenomena are closely related but distinct conceptualizations of withholding effort (Kidwell & Robie, 2003).

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