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Paper

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The Effect of Gender on Peer Performance Evaluations: An Investigation on Design Teams

An integrated project team (IPT) is a multidisciplinary, relatively autonomous, project oriented work team. IPTs are used in industry, not only to increase productivity in solving problems but also to form and sustain strategic capabilities through employee learning. To prepare students for similar problem solving responsibilities, and to foster engineering principles learning, a comparable approach to IPTs is used during the Introduction to Engineering Design and Graphics (ED&G 100) course at the Pennsylvania State University.

In general, four-student project teams work on two design projects over a 16-week semester. Design projects focus on product improvement or solution designs. In general, students are from a variety of engineering majors, because the course is mandatory for most engineering majors. However, non-engineering students may enroll as well. Thus, multidisciplinary teams are typically formed.

This study undertakes an investigation to measure the effects of gender composition in integrated project teams on peer evaluated team member performances. Peer performances are assessed by using a Likert scale on 11 dimensions including commitment to team goals, participation, clarity of comments, avoiding interpersonal conflict, completion of tasks on time and accurately. The data set collected over a three semester period of time is revealed.