

## Focus Group Interview of Group 1

Participants' information:

Nicknames	Sexuality	Major
A	Female	Hydrology
B	Male	Mechanics
C	Female	CS
D	Female	Microelectronics
E	Female	Mathematics

According to our investigations, group cooperation is very common in our university, so our group wants to discuss the topic of group collaboration among students in SUSTech. We invited 5 people of different majors and sexuality (the detailed information is shown above) so as to have a comprehensive idea of our topic. This focus group interview was held in Yidan Library 307 at 4 p.m. on March 27<sup>th</sup> and it lasted about 1 hour. The following is our interview overview and major findings.

In the first part, we want to explore students' attitudes and views towards group collaboration.

First, we asked the focus group attendants about the necessity of each time's discussion.

Hydrology: In groups of three, we prefer to discuss between two members because of convenience. Three participants' discussion is not too common.

Mechanics: Answers to the original question cannot provide useful information due to the two choices: necessary or not. It may be reasonable to set up a question like:

'Which genre of discussion is necessary?'

Then, when we asked them whether they were more willing to be a group member or leader, they replied to us with a consensus choice: a group member, especially in public optional courses (not the specialized courses).

Then, we proposed the question that what personalities did you think should a leader possess?

Mechanics: good leadership and sufficient patience to mediate contradiction in the groups

CS: excellent professional abilities and abundant knowledge about this lesson or project

Hydrology: a leader is responsible for assigning tasks reasonably

And participants suggested that those choices should be chosen with an order with the consideration of importance in the mind of interviewees.

When it came to the size of each group, they agreed to 2-3 members, otherwise it was easy to lead to loaf on the project. But they also questioned whether the size would be influenced by different lessons.

Finally, we interviewed their ideal grading ways: equal scores among a group or

different ones.

Microelectronics: If everyone's distribution does not differ greatly, equal grading can be adopted. However, when there is a serious overbalance in individuals' task loads, each member should be given different scores. In my classes, teachers have the rule that if a group does not clarify personal contribution on the report, they will consider equal marks.

In the second part, we want to have deeper insights into engagement and efficiency in group work.

First, we asked the focus group participants about their self-evaluation in engagement. This depends on specific situations.

Microelectronics: This largely depends on ability. Sometimes it is hard for me to follow up with some other group members, so they will finish more tasks.

Mechanics: It partly depends on my interests. If I am interested in the subject, I would like to engage more.

They also suggested setting blanks for the questionnaires.

Then we asked whether group work brings better output than done by individuals. They reached an agreement that it is decided by group members.

We then discussed the punctuation of the group meeting. In their major experiences, people participant on time.

We asked whether group tasks will be arranged equally. They said normally it won't be balanced.

Microelectronics: Different people own varied abilities.

Hydrology: Since the group size is often 2-3, our tasks are approximately assigned equally.

CS: Different people hold different attitudes to projects. And they will balance between group work and the final paper examination.

Within the group, they said they seldomly argue with group members. They will discuss with each other peacefully and reach an agreement rather than an argument.

All of the participants said that they won't make a timetable for the project unless they were asked to. And in most cases, they will finish the whole work till the day of the deadline.

The third part is the discussion concerning the impact group collaboration has on the students.

Firstly, we asked them what things they want to do once the project is finished.

Most of them said they would dine together if they had pleasant cooperation.

The next question is whether their daily schedule changed compared to usual.

CS & Mechanics: Changed.

Hydrology: No change.

Also, we accept the idea that using numbers from 0 to 5 to quantify the extent of the impact.

Then came the question that how the relationship changed between you and your teammates after group collaboration, and that whether you tend to collaborate with

people you have already known or you never know.

Most of the students tend to collaborate with people they have already known, and there are also some students who want to make new friends. In most cases, if you cooperate with someone you never know before, the two will become acquaintances thereafter instead of intimate friends.

We also wanted to ask whether their personalities changes after the group collaboration. However, they reached a consensus that one's personality is hard to change and suggested us amend the question we 'whether you perform differently in individual task and group project.

Finally, the students we invited supplemented some questions that we can ask in our questionnaire. For instance, 'Will you want to finish group project earlier compared to individual task', 'Which helps improve the personal capability more, individual task or group collaboration', 'What does group collaboration impact you most', 'Whether you tend to collaborate with people you familiar with or with people who have strong personal capability' and so on. What's more, we should clearly define the time period of some questions.

Through this focus group interview, we not only have an overall view towards our topic but also receive some useful information. According to their feedback, we set the questions' options and consider revising or deleting some controversial questions to improve our questionnaire.