

Student Expectations, Classroom Community, and Value Reported on Group Exams

Erik Tyler Carr, Timothy Sault, Steven F. Wolf

East Carolina University, Department of Physics, Greenville, NC 27858

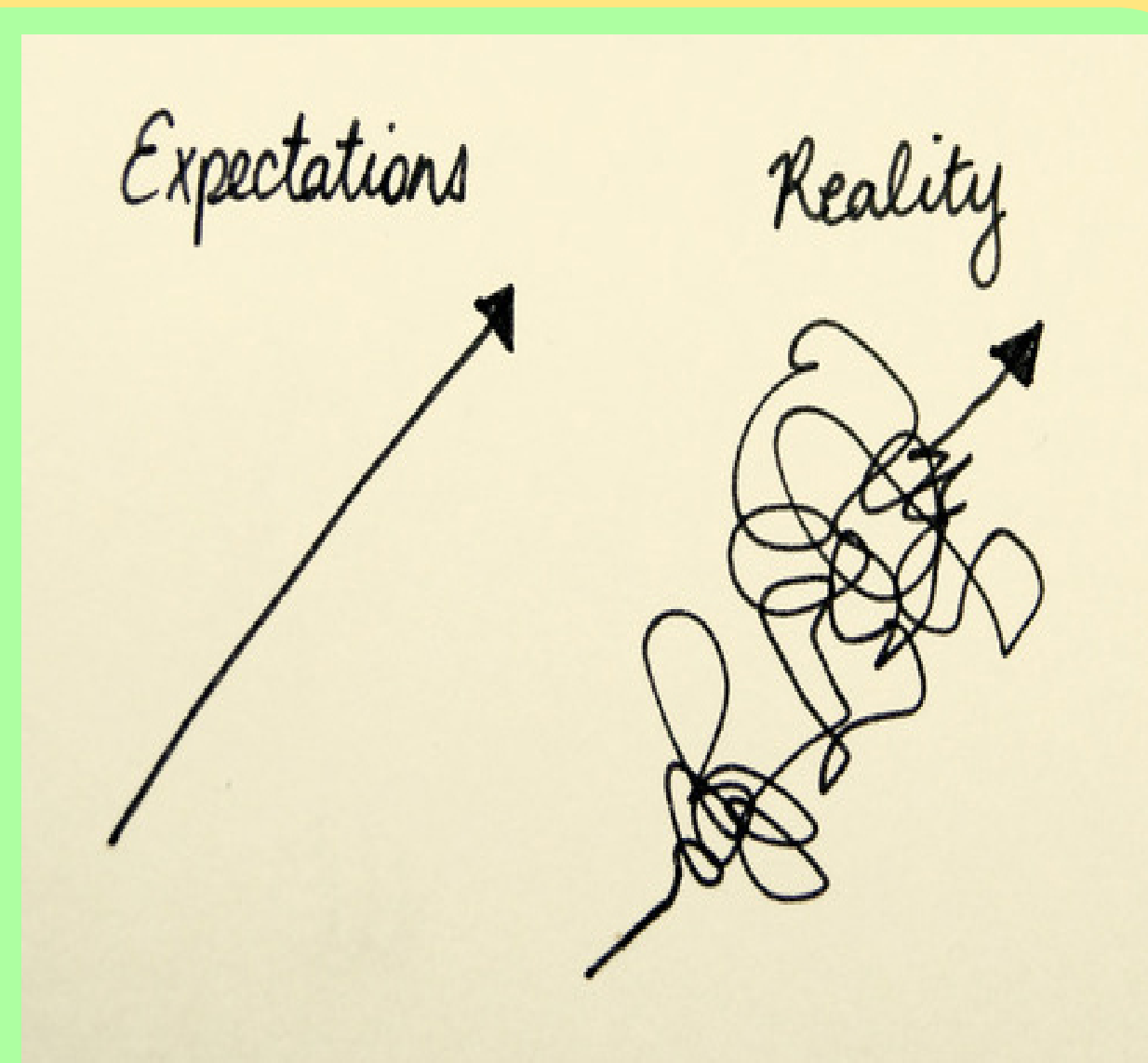
Abstract

Group exams are an assessment technique that has been gaining traction in recent years. Group exams provide students with an environment that amplifies typical collaborative learning. We interviewed students who were taking group exams in physics classes to learn about how they report group exams influence their expectations of peers, their involvement in the classroom community, and their external values. Given the paradigm-changing nature of group exams, we find that experience is a key factor in these areas.

Context and Emergent Themes

What do students **expect** from their group mates?

"I expect... that you've reviewed the material, you've got an idea of what the concept is, and at that point just discussion..." -Abigail



Which type of exam do students **value** most to prepare them for a career?

"I would say the group... I think it teaches you how to groupthink, and how to, you know, communicate in a group effectively to get the work done." -Malcolm

Context

- Four semi-structured interviews
- Two novice group exam takers
- Two experienced group exam takers
- Students take an individual exam
- A duplicate exam is taken in groups during the next class
- Students are allowed to work in open collaboration

Are students active members of the **classroom community** via scientific debate?

"We... **all argued** why one answer is better than another one. So people... contributed to my understanding." -Ethan



Do group exams provide a **different** experience than in-class group work?

"It definitely was an experience working everything out with people, I've never had to do that... Well, I have had to do it sometimes but not in a way that like, means something." -Heather

Conclusions and Future Directions

Student Expectations

- Come prepared
- Effort trumps efficiency
- Higher expectations of self = higher expectations of peers

Student Values

- Groupthinking
- Communication skills
- Prepares students for future careers

Moving Forward

- How do instructor choices affect student behavior?
- How do student expectations affect evidence required for claim change?

Classroom Community

- Fosters civil scientific debate
- Increases communication between peers and teachers

Group Vs. Individual

- Group exams \neq group work
- Group exams mean more to students

References

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C.E. Wiemen, G. W. Rieger, and C. E. Heiner, The Physics Teacher 52 (2014).

