

Comparative Assessment of Peer Evaluation Processes
Darla Domke-Damonte and Kay Keels
Wall College of Business Administration

Abstract: Project-based teamwork is an integral part of many upper-level business school courses (Bacon, Stewart & Silver, 1999; Hirsch, Shwom & McKenna, 2003). Often the project represents a significant portion of the individual student's course grade. Consequently, the effective functioning of the formed groups is crucial to the student's success in the course. The choice or assignment of team membership can be, for the most part, under the instructor's control, but the internal functioning of the group cannot. Groups mutually agree upon their own meeting times, their own meeting places, their own schedules and their own work processes, most of which is beyond the instructor's control or view. Obviously, the instructor cannot observe every group's process and functioning (May & Gueldenzoph, 2003).

The final work product is neither an adequate nor an accurate reflection of the effort of individual team members. Nor is the post hoc peer evaluation via a format prescribed by the instructor. With instructor-devised measures, students often respond either too positively (not wishing to offend anyone), too negatively (taking the opportunity to work out frustrations or personal issues), or exactly at the mid-point (assessing everyone's work and effort as equal). Some studies have documented instances of gender- or minority-based bias (Johnson & Smith, 1997). Because the assessment instrument is instructor-devised, students are often pre-occupied with trying to guess what the instructor wants them to say, and they are not really sure how to use the instrument to reflect accurately what went on in the group, or they perceive the evaluation sheet be something that should be dispatched summarily, rather than carefully considered. In the studies reviewed for this project, none involved student-developed assessment instruments or methods. In this study, we will investigate a different approach to peer evaluation whereby student groups develop their own contract and assessment method.