

Technical Projects: Understanding Teamwork Satisfaction In an Introductory IS Course

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ABSTRACT

Information Systems (IS) projects are increasingly staffed by cross-functional teams working together to solve complex tasks. To better prepare students for this business reality, higher education institutions need to integrate team projects within their courses. Despite good intentions, these team projects do not always have the desired outcomes. Often times, the resulting product does not necessarily benefit from the contributions of all team members, and students express frustration when having to work with other team members. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, we examined factors that might influence teamwork satisfaction on a group database project in an undergraduate IS course. The top three factors found to enhance perceptions of teamwork satisfaction were team spirit, work ethic, and equal team member contributions. The top three factors that serve as barriers to teamwork satisfaction were lack of participation in teams, inadequate technical skills, and poor communication among team members. The quantitative analysis confirmed findings that students in high-collaboration teams were more satisfied than students in low-collaboration teams. Recommendations on structuring satisfying team experiences for students are provided.

Key Words: collaboration, cooperative learning, teamwork satisfaction, student attitudes, group projects