

# CETL Capstone Project

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English 101

## OBJECTIVE

My objective this semester was to implement teamwork into my English 101 course in order to provide a writing community for students participating in my section of English Composition.

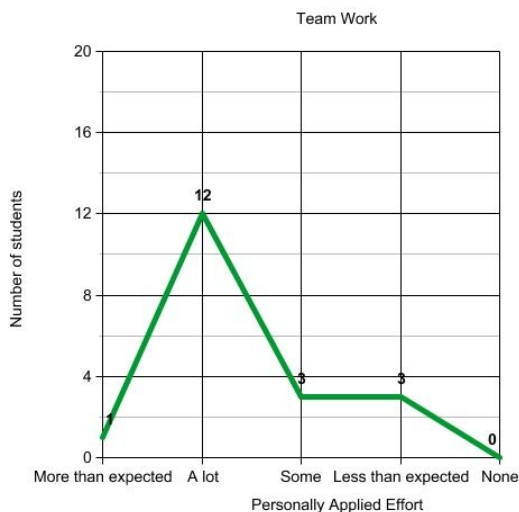
## METHOD

In my grading breakdown, I incorporated teamwork as 15% of a student's grades, to encourage a sense of importance about the project (see Appendix A). Each student was assigned a team after an initial review of their first day writing samples. Students were grouped according to strengths and weaknesses and with a sense of diversity (specifically across gender lines) in mind. Daily, students were required to work together in understanding and applying class concepts through a variety of activities. The option to work alone on in-class projects was provided, but the majority of the time, students were asked to work in their teams. For each major paper assignment students were asked to review their teammates' papers according to guidelines that I provided (See Appendix B). The 15% of their grade came from their work with this team revision. Students' final grades on each paper were averaged and then a team score was issued to each team. This cumulative score was then applied towards each student's individual grades. Students did receive individual grades on their papers as well. Overall, team revision counted for about 3% of a students' grade for each paper.

## RESULTS

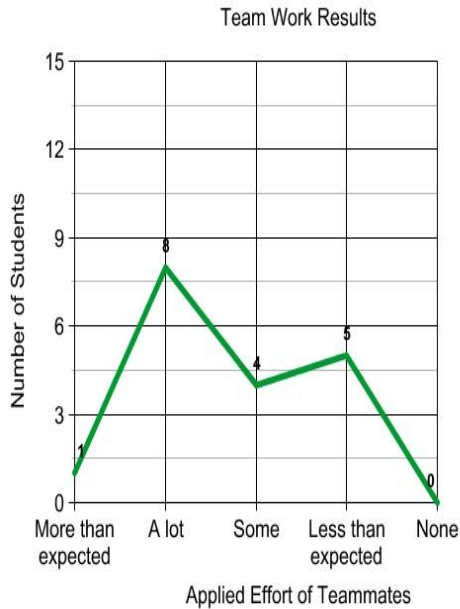
Near the end of the semester, I administered an anonymous survey to my class that contained questions concerning their experiences with teamwork in English 101. Twenty students participated in this survey. Four of the questions asked them to rate their experiences from 1-5. Below are the results of these four questions.

1. How much effort did you put into team work (especially team review)?



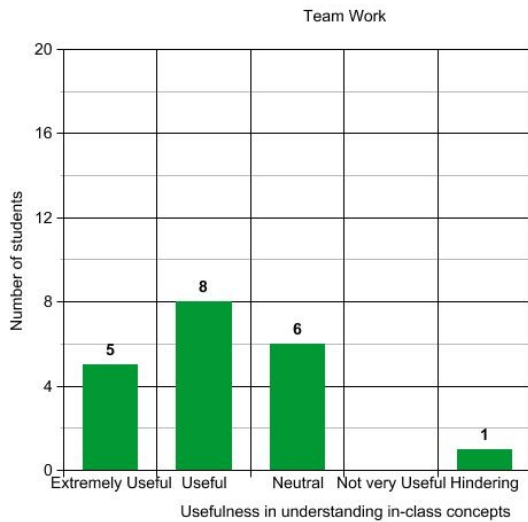
The majority of students rated themselves as having provided an adequate amount of input into teamwork. They cited their reasons for doing so as "I didn't want to disappoint the group," and "I realized the more effort I put forth, the more my writing would improve."

2. How much effort did your teammates put into team work?



I then asked them to rate the effort applied by their team mates. Interestingly, even though most rated their own effort very highly, many rated their teammates as less than satisfactory in their efforts. Some students had positive things to say, "We all have the same goal of getting good grades and we all make sure to have our assignments ready," and "there was a lot of great effort, especially on my papers." But many felt that there was a sense of apathy towards participating (in team review especially), "It varied from person to person, some didn't try at all others worked very hard."

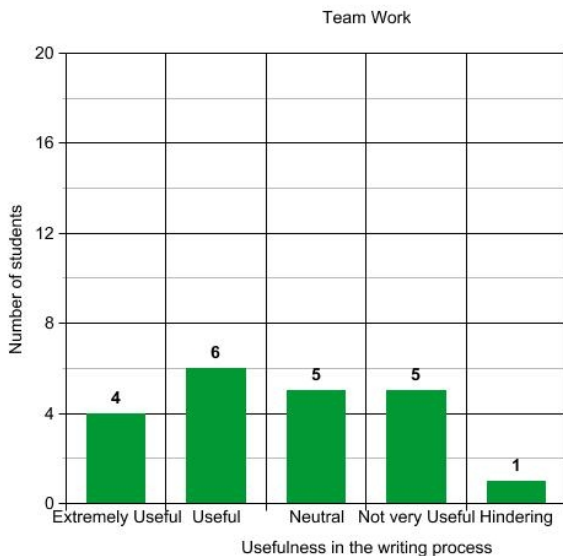
3. How helpful was teamwork in your understanding of in-class concepts?



The response to this question was very positive, the students found it quite beneficial having a community of other students to freely discuss instructions and concepts with. There was little confusion as to due dates, paper format, and specific instructions, as each had at least three other people to compare notes with. I received such responses as, "It was easy to understand when I had people to talk about it with," "Having a group to discuss things with made it easier to understand. Some people knew more about

specific topics or were better at explaining," and "It made getting points I missed easier to comprehend."

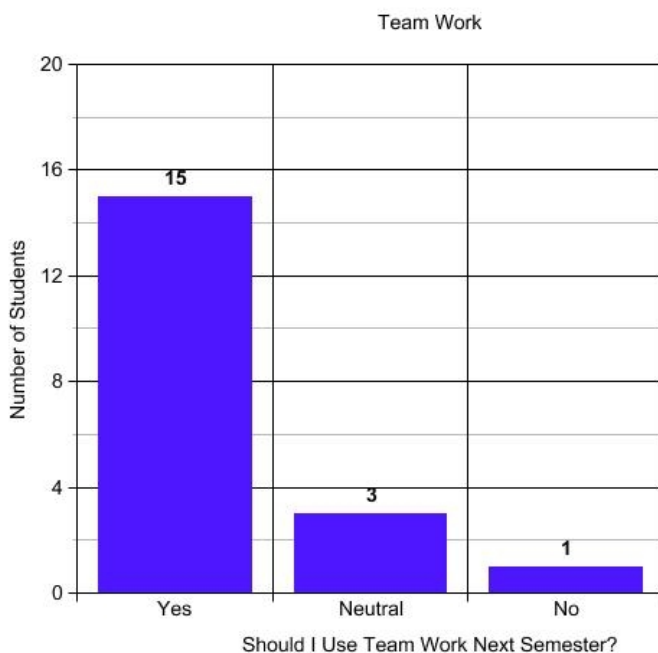
4 How useful was team work for your writing?



Despite receiving mixed numbers with this question, (which surprised me because the quality of the students' writing seemed to increase as the semester progressed and they became more comfortable in their groups), the written responses mostly maintained that the practice had helped their writing. I received such responses as, "Without team revision sessions, I don't think that my papers would be as good as they were," "When I started

using it more seriously it helped me out a great amount," "I have improved to the point of a grade I am proud of," and "It improved my writing substantially and I was able to understand my errors." There were a couple of neutral responses such as, "It was ok," and "didn't make any negative impacts, but didn't make any positive ones either." Only one student outright stated a dislike practice, stating, "They basically told me things I already knew."

I also asked the students if they thought that I should implement teamwork next semester.



Almost every student agreed that I should implement the practice again, citing such reasons as "yes, it keeps the class more active and alert. It makes learning things interesting," "Teamwork gets people to interact with each other", and "Yes, it improved my writing!"

### **Conclusion**

Applying teamwork to writing has significantly assisted many of my students in English Comp. this semester. Team revision has greatly increased the quality of students' final drafts due to the availability of a student community. There are some changes I plan on making next semester, including less in-class collaborative writing projects and seeing more student writing samples before assigning them to teams.

## Appendix A

### Grading Criteria:

✓ Personal Narrative	10%
✓ Summary	10%
✓ Annotated Bibliography	5%
✓ Argumentative Synthesis	20%
✓ Analysis	10%
✓ Critique	10%
✓ Electronic Portfolio	5%
✓ Team Collaboration	15%
✓ Blog	5%
✓ Participation	10%

## Appendix B

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### Team Revision for Argumentative Synthesis

The suggestions that you give your peers are going to greatly influence the grades that they get on their papers. I want you to carefully examine each paper on three levels- Global, Local, and Surface. You need to thoroughly review each paper and give detailed, specific advice. Give the kind of advice that you would like to see on your papers. This will count towards the 15% of your grade that is determined by team scores. Follow this checklist for each paper that you review and write your answers on a separate piece of paper (make sure to include your name).

Read the paper once through without making any marks on it. Then answer these questions and “correct” the paper. It should easily take you the entire class period to review all of your team members’ papers.

#### GLOBAL REVISION

1. Restate the thesis.
2. Does the thesis have a clear **argument** or is it just explaining something?
3. How can this thesis be improved? Give one suggestion.
4. What is the main point of each paragraph? Jot down your understanding of these points.
5. How does each paragraph relate/not relate to the thesis? What is the purpose of each paragraph? Does each paragraph have a purpose? Answer yes or no, explain why not.
6. Give at least one suggestion for paper re-organization.
7. Does the paper meet the length requirement (at least **4** pgs)? If not, give one suggestion for expansion.
8. List the sources being used. Are there at least **three**?

9. Are the sources well **synthesized**? Does each paragraph cite at least 2 sources? Give one suggestion for further synthesis.
10. Were there any areas that just didn't sound right when you read the paper through? If so, underline them and give one suggestion to fix the problem.

#### LOCAL REVISION

1. Is the paper in **present tense**? Circle any incorrect verb tense.
2. Is it in **3<sup>rd</sup>** person p.o.v.? Circle p.o.v. inconsistencies.
3. Are there any **vague** pronouns (they, it) or references?
4. Is there any unnecessary repetition?
5. **Are there adequate in-text citations**? Are ideas, paraphrases, and quotations cited?
6. Does each sentence relate to the topic sentence?

#### SURFACE REVISION

1. Spelling-circle all spelling errors.
2. Homonyms(there-their, witch-which)-circle all homonyms.
3. Punctuation-circle any questionable punctuation.
4. Are the in-text citations correctly punctuated?

Lastly...

1. Is there a title?
2. **Is there a Works Cited page**?
3. Is the paper in correct MLA format?