UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS ARLINGTON

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND REPORTING

MEASURING TEAMWORK SKILLS OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS ARLINGTON

Fall 2024 Report

Measuring Teamwork Skills, Fall 2024 Report

Teamwork is an essential professional competency, enabling individuals to collaborate effectively toward shared goals. Employers consistently identify the ability to work productively in team settings as one of the most valued skills in new graduates (Hart Research Associates, 2013; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2023). In the academic context, teamwork fosters the development of communication, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and interpersonal skills that are transferable across disciplines and professional environments.

Within the Texas Core Curriculum, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) identifies Teamwork as one of six Core Objectives. At The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), this objective is assessed on a rotating cycle across designated Foundational Component Areas (FCAs). In Fall 2024, Teamwork was assessed through sole assessment, in which course instructors evaluated students' teamwork performance, based on moderated peer- and self-scores, using a Group Project Team Member Critique Sheet. This instrument, developed by the Communication faculty, is closely aligned with the AAC&U Teamwork VALUE rubric.

Unlike juried or communal scoring, where multiple trained raters independently evaluate anonymized student work, sole assessment relies on a single evaluator, typically the course instructor, applying a rubric to their students' performance. This approach is less resource-intensive and can be integrated seamlessly into course activities, allowing for efficient collection of large data across multiple sections.

This report presents the findings from Fall 2024, summarizing student performance on each teamwork dimension, demographic characteristics of the assessed population, and key observations regarding UTA students' teamwork skills.

Method

Participants

The data were collected from 580 undergraduate students enrolled in multiple sections of *COMS 2302 – Professional and Technical Communication*, a course within the Texas Core Curriculum. These students represented a range of academic levels, demographic backgrounds, and experiences, providing a diverse sample for evaluating teamwork skills in the context of collaborative course projects.

In terms of gender distribution, 72.8% were male (n = 423) and 27.2% were female (n = 157).

The racial/ethnic composition of the sample included Hispanic/Latino students (36.1%), White students (16.9%), Asian students (16.4%), Black/African American students (9.6%), and Others (21%). Nearly half of the sample (48%) identified as first-generation students, while 41.2% were non-first-generation, and first-generation status data were unavailable for 10.8% of students (see Table 1 for details).

Table 1: Student Demographics

Categorical Information	N	%
Gender		
Female	157	27.2%
Male	423	72.8%
Racial/Ethnic Description		
Hispanic/Latino	210	36.1%
White	98	16.9%
Asian	95	16.4%
Black/African American	55	9.6%
Others*	122	21.0%
First Generation Student		
First-Generation	279	48.0%
Non-First-Generation	239	41.2%
First-Generation Data Unavailable	62	10.8%

* Native American, Dual Ethnicity, Not Disclosed Race/Ethnicity, and Foreign Students

As detailed in Table 2, students represented all academic levels, with juniors (45.8%) and sophomores (29.4%) making up the largest portions of the sample. Seniors accounted for 22.4%, freshmen 1.5%, and fifth-year students less than 1%. Enrollment year data indicate that most participants entered UTA in either the 2023–2024 (41.5%) or 2024–2025 (29.9%) academic years. The majority were enrolled full-time (88.8%), with 11.2% attending part-time. Approximately one-third (33.6%) of students were transfer students, while 66.4% began their studies at UTA. (see Table 2 for details).

Table 2: *Student Status at UT Arlington*

Categorical Information	N	%
Academic Level		
Junior	266	45.8%
Sophomore	171	29.4%
Senior	130	22.4%

Freshman	9	1.5%
Fifth Year	5	0.9%
Enrollment Year		
2024 – 2025	174	29.9%
2023 – 2024	241	41.5%
2022 - 2023	111	19.1%
2021 – 2022	30	5.2%
2020 and Prior	24	4.3%
Academic Load		
Enrolled Full-Time	515	88.8%
Enrolled Part-Time	65	11.2%
Transfer Student		
Non-Transferred	385	66.4%
Transferred	195	33.6%

The student work assessed for core objective Teamwork in Fall 2024 came from a broad range of academic disciplines across UTA.

Table 3: *Students by Colleges/Schools*

College/School	No. of Students	Percentage
College of Engineering	533	91.9%
College of Science	26	4.5%
College of Liberal Arts	11	1.9%
Division of Student Success	7	1.2%
College of Nursing & Health Innovation	2	0.3%
College of Business	1	0.2%

Most students (91.9%) were enrolled in the College of Engineering, reflecting the course's integration into degree plans within that college. Smaller proportions were from the College of Science (4.5%), College of Liberal Arts (1.9%), Division of Student Success (1.2%), College of Nursing and Health Innovation (0.3%), and College of Business (0.2%) (see Table 3 for details).

Procedure

Faculty teaching *COMS 2302 – Professional and Technical Communication* course integrated the teamwork skills assessment into existing group project assignments. A critique sheet, developed by faculty members of Communication department and closely aligned with the AAC&U Teamwork VALUE rubric, was used to score teamwork skills of each student. Students worked in assigned teams to complete a substantial project over the course of the term requiring collaboration in planning, task

delegation, communication, and conflict resolution. At the conclusion of the project, each student completed the Group Project Team Member Critique Sheet, evaluating both their own contributions and those of their teammates. For every rating assigned, whether to themselves or to a peer, students were required to provide a written justification explaining the basis for their assessment.

Instructors collected self- and peer-evaluation forms for each group. They reviewed the numeric ratings alongside the written justifications to assess the validity and appropriateness of the scores. Using this information, instructors determined a final teamwork score for each student in each of the five assessment dimensions. This final score reflected a synthesis of the student's self-assessment and the evaluations provided by peers, moderated by the instructor's judgment based on the evidence in the justifications. The instructor-recorded scores were then submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting (IER) for analysis and reporting.

Faculty who developed and implemented the Group Project Team Member Critique Sheet reviewed the scoring scale and determined that an attainment target of 3.0 on the 1–5 scale is appropriate for measuring acceptable teamwork skills. This benchmark reflects the expectation that students should consistently demonstrate above-average collaboration skills across all measured dimensions.

Assessment Instrument

The Group Project Team Member Critique Sheet served as the primary assessment instrument for this project. The instrument was designed to measure teamwork behaviors at the individual student level within the course projects. While adapted to the course's instructional goals, the critique sheet is closely aligned with the AAC&U Teamwork VALUE Rubric and retains its emphasis on observable, process-oriented teamwork behaviors rather than final project outcomes. The critique sheet evaluates students across five core dimensions of teamwork:

1. Brainstorming/Solution-Seeking: The extent to which a student contributes ideas, articulates the merits of proposals, and offers constructive alternative solutions during team meetings.
2. Facilitates the Contributions of Team Members: How effectively a student encourages, supports, and engages others, including noticing when someone is not participating and inviting their input.
3. Dependability/Accountability Outside of Team Meetings: The frequency, timeliness, and quality of a student's individual contributions outside of formal meetings, including proactive

support for other team members.

4. Fosters Constructive Team Climate: The degree to which a student maintains respectful, positive, and motivating communication that promotes a productive team environment.
5. Conflict Resolution: How well a student addresses and manages conflict constructively to strengthen team cohesion and effectiveness.

In addition to these five dimensions, the critique sheet includes an overall rating of each team member's performance and space for written justification of ratings. The rating scale ranges from 5 ("excelled with a strong contribution") to 1 ("performed poorly"), with a description provided to guide scoring. This scale differs slightly from the four-point structure of the AAC&U VALUE rubric, offering instructors and students an expanded range for recognizing varying levels of performance. By adapting the VALUE rubric's conceptual framework into a course-specific instrument, faculty ensured that the assessment criteria were both rigorous and relevant to the specific communication and collaboration skills emphasized in the course.

Instructors reviewed all self- and peer-evaluations for their groups, paying close attention to the written justifications. These qualitative statements were used to validate or adjust numeric ratings before calculating a final teamwork score for each student. This instructor-mediated peer assessment process ensured that final scores reflected not only quantitative peer feedback but also qualitative evidence of teamwork behaviors. The combination of numeric scores and narrative comments provided a justified assessment of student's teamwork skills.

Analysis and Results

Student Performance

Overall, student performance on the teamwork dimensions was consistently high, with mean scores ranging from 4.40 to 4.56 on a 5-point scale. All dimensions significantly exceeded the attainment target of 3.0, indicating that students, on average, demonstrated teamwork skills above the acceptable performance level. The highest-rated dimension was Fosters Constructive Team Climate ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.57$), suggesting that students were generally perceived as respectful, positive, and motivating in their team interactions. Conflict Resolution also scored highly ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.61$), reflecting strong abilities to address and manage disagreements constructively. The lowest, though still strong, dimension was Facilitates the Contributions of Team Members ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.64$), (see Table 4).

Table 4: Mean Scores for Teamwork Skills

Measurement Dimensions	N	Mean	SD
Brainstorming/Solution-Seeking	580	4.46	0.61
Facilitates the Contributions of Team Members	580	4.40	0.64
Dependability/Accountability Outside of Team Meetings	580	4.46	0.65
Fosters Constructive Team Climate	580	4.56	0.57
Conflict Resolution	580	4.51	0.61

Summary, Observations, and Limitations

In Fall 2024, teamwork skills of 580 undergraduate students were evaluated. These students were enrolled in multiple sections of COMS 2302 – Professional and Technical Communication course. Using the Group Project Team Member Critique Sheet, instructors assessed student performance on five teamwork dimensions aligned with the AAC&U VALUE rubric. Mean scores for all dimensions exceeded the attainment target of 3.0 by a substantial margin. These results suggest that, overall, UTA students demonstrated strong teamwork skills that are relevant and transferable to professional settings.

Some limitations should be considered when interpreting these results. The assessment used an instructor-mediated peer evaluation process in which students rated both themselves and their teammates, providing written justifications for each score. While instructors reviewed these justifications and moderated the ratings to produce a final score for each student, the process still relied heavily on the accuracy, honesty, and fairness of peer feedback. Peer evaluations can be influenced by interpersonal relationships, perceived reciprocity, or reluctance to rate classmates negatively. Since the process lacks the multiple-rater calibration of juried assessment, it is important to interpret results with an understanding of potential variability or inflation in scoring practices. Additionally, because the assessment occurred in the context of a single course, the findings may not fully represent teamwork skills as applied in other courses or disciplinary contexts.

References

Association of American Colleges and Universities (2019). *VALUE Rubrics*. Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics/

Hart Research Associates. (2013). *It takes more than a major: Employer priorities for college learning and student success*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2023). *Job outlook 2023*. Bethlehem, PA: National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Appendix A: Group Project Team Member Critique Sheet

COMS 2302 GROUP PROJECT TEAM MEMBER CRITIQUE SHEET

GROUP NAME: _____ DATE: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Evaluate each team member's performance for the group project (beginning with yourself) and provide justification for your rating of each team member. Before evaluating yourself and your team members, read the following descriptions of each characteristic.

GROUP CHARACTERISTIC KEY – Use key to help with team member rating/justification

Brainstorming/Solution-Seeking
This involves how well the person contributes ideas and solutions in team meetings. Did they help the team move forward by articulating the merits of their ideas and/or alternative ideas or proposals?

Facilitates the Contributions of Team Members
This involves how well the person encouraged/supported the contributions of their team members. Did they engage team members in ways that facilitate that person's contributions to meetings? Did they notice when someone was not participating and encourage them to engage?

Dependability/Accountability Outside of Team Meetings
This involves the frequency and strength of a person's individual contributions outside of the team meetings. Did they complete all of their assigned tasks by the deadlines the group set? Was the work that was accomplished thorough? Was it comprehensive? And did it advance the goals of the project? Did this person proactively help other team members complete their assigned tasks to a similar level of excellence?

Fosters Constructive Team Climate
This involves how well the person supported a healthy, productive team climate by doing all of the following: Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members. How well did this person do these things?

Conflict Resolution
This involves how well the person responds to conflict that occurred within the group. Did the person address destructive conflict directly and constructively? Did they seek to help manage/ resolve the issues that arose in a way that strengthened the overall team cohesiveness and future effectiveness?

Overall
Lastly, give an overall assessment of this person. Would you work with this person again? Was the individual proactive, communicative, and responsible? Can they be trusted to effectively contribute in a team-based setting?
A Rating of (5) Means: This person excelled with very strong contributions
A Rating of (4) Means: This person met all expectations and did well a.k.a. above average
A Rating of (4) Means: This person met most, but not all expectations, was average
A Rating of (4) Means: This person met only a few expectations, needs considerable improvement
A Rating of (4) Means: This person met no expectations and performed poorly

Your Name: _____

1. **Brainstorming/Solution-Seeking**	5	4	3	2	1
2. **Facilitates the Contributions of Members**	5	4	3	2	1
3. **Dependability/Accountability Outside of Meetings**	5	4	3	2	1
4. **Fosters Constructive Team Climate**	5	4	3	2	1
5. **Conflict Resolution**	5	4	3	2	1
6. **Overall**	5	4	3	2	1

Rating Justification:
_____
_____
_____

Team Member's Name: _____

1. **Brainstorming/Solution-Seeking**	5	4	3	2	1
2. **Facilitates the Contributions of Members**	5	4	3	2	1
3. **Dependability/Accountability Outside of Meetings**	5	4	3	2	1
4. **Fosters Constructive Team Climate**	5	4	3	2	1
5. **Conflict Resolution**	5	4	3	2	1
6. **Overall**	5	4	3	2	1

Rating Justification:
_____
_____
_____

Team Member's Name: _____

1. **Brainstorming/Solution-Seeking**	5	4	3	2	1
2. **Facilitates the Contributions of Members**	5	4	3	2	1
3. **Dependability/Accountability Outside of Meetings**	5	4	3	2	1
4. **Fosters Constructive Team Climate**	5	4	3	2	1
5. **Conflict Resolution**	5	4	3	2	1
6. **Overall**	5	4	3	2	1

Rating Justification:
_____
_____
_____

Appendix B: AAC&U Teamwork VALUE Rubric

TEAMWORK VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

Association of American Colleges and Universities

Definition

Teamwork is behaviors under the control of individual team members (effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions.)

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	**Milestones** 3	2	**Benchmark** 1
Contributes to Team Meetings	Helps the team move forward by articulating the merits of alternative ideas or proposals.	Offers alternative solutions or courses of action that build on the ideas of others.	Offers new suggestions to advance the work of the group.	Shares ideas but does not advance the work of the group.
Facilitates the Contributions of Team Members	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to meetings by both constructively building upon or synthesizing the contributions of others as well as noticing when someone is not participating and inviting them to engage.	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to meetings by constructively building upon or synthesizing the contributions of others.	Engages team members in ways that facilitate their contributions to meetings by restating the views of other team members and/or asking questions for clarification.	Engages team members by taking turns and listening to others without interrupting.
Individual Contributions Outside of Team Meetings	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished is thorough, comprehensive, and advances the project. Proactively helps other team members complete their assigned tasks to a similar level of excellence.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished is thorough, comprehensive, and advances the project.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline; work accomplished advances the project.	Completes all assigned tasks by deadline.
Fosters Constructive Team Climate	Supports a constructive team climate by doing all of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any three of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any two of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.	Supports a constructive team climate by doing any one of the following: • Treats team members respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication. • Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the team and its work. • Motivates teammates by expressing confidence about the importance of the task and the team's ability to accomplish it. • Provides assistance and/or encouragement to team members.
Responds to Conflict	Addresses destructive conflict directly and constructively, helping to manage/resolve it in a way that strengthens overall team cohesiveness and future effectiveness.	Identifies and acknowledges conflict and stays engaged with it.	Redirecting focus toward common ground, toward task at hand (away from conflict).	Passively accepts alternate viewpoints/ideas/opinions.