Abstract – This paper reports on a research project that set out to uncover ways in which senior level Organizational Leadership and Supervision (OLS) students measure group behaviors and teamwork dynamics. The research raised such important questions as: What behaviors will the senior OLS students identify as group behaviors? What will the students identify as teamwork behaviors? How will the students measure or assess the effectiveness of these behaviors? In order to answer the aforementioned questions, a focus group of OLS seniors was created and allowed to compile their own list of behaviors deemed necessary to measure teamwork dynamics. Using this list, the students were instructed to develop a rubric to measure teamwork dynamics. The results were then compared to relevant literature, specifically Hoegl and Gemuenden’s Teamwork Quality Construct (TWQ) which measures the quality of teamwork collaboration.

Index Terms – teamwork dynamics, Organizational Leadership and Supervision, group behaviors, measuring team dynamics.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, an essential skill demanded from businesses for college graduates is that they are team players, understand team dynamics, and can work together in diverse groups to complete complex goals. This comes as a direct result from the ever expanding global economy and some past economical decisions that paved the way for change in business thinking. Many successful attempts have been made to establish standards on ways to create teams, how many team members are “ideal”, and how to handle issues that impede the teamwork process.

In this paper, a short literature review of teamwork effectiveness and attempts to measure it will be addressed. Results of a small panel session will also be discussed. The discussion was held at IUPUI by 3 OLS seniors in an attempt to develop one common rubric to measure teamwork effectiveness. Topics discussed related to teamwork, group work, team dynamics, and student attitudes revolving around these issues at IUPUI.

TEAMWORK PERFORMANCE – THEORETICAL VIEWPOINTS

When reviewing the literature, we became aware that there are many descriptions concerning teamwork performance and the effectiveness of teams. This would explain for the many different attempts to measure certain aspects of teamwork effectiveness. Each author had a different meaning of the phrase “team performance”, which was also discovered by MacBryde and Mendibil. They quote: “In order to gain a good understanding of the performance of teams, it was required to search and analyze literature from different research disciplines.”[5]

Another team performance idea derived from the research of Robertson and Tippett, where they believed that effective team performance meant that teams stayed together for the “long run”.[6] Short-term performance could be measured by maintaining budgets, schedules, and other easily quantifiable means. The long-term performance was measured by the “degree to which a team is growing and maturing internally”.[6].

In the research of Hoegl and Gemuenden [1], their take on teamwork performance meant that the focus was on the collaboration between team members. So, their idea was to measure how well people worked together as a group by measuring these six facets: Communication, coordination, balance of member contributions, mutual support, and effort and cohesion. If the collaboration between members was high, then the team was declared effective. If the team met its budgets and schedules appropriately, then it was considered efficient. Again, teamwork effectiveness is split into two separate but equally important subtopics.

MEASURING TEAMWORK EFFECTIVENESS

Not only do we need to study multiple sides to teamwork effectiveness, but also an understanding needs be presented that the dynamics of teamwork are changing constantly become important to identify. The factor is presented by Senior [4]. She states that “A particular set of constructs may have limited life. As the purpose and processes of a team change, the constructs relevant to that team’s performance may need to change with new sets of constructs identified…” (p. 32). The student team will be comprised of many different individuals with diverse backgrounds, so the team or group should be aware that teamwork “action plans” should be considered fluid.

Measuring a combination of methods, this will give the researchers an accurate depiction of the students’ personal teamwork performance ideas. Going on the results of Miller’s
A listing of many attitudes was generated from the three-hour session. Many ideas stemmed for the personal experiences that the students’ have been a part of, or from knowledge taught to them in the various classes they have attended. An interesting fact to point out is that the students also expressed attitudes about group work and the apparent differences when opposed to actual “teaming”. Group work has more relationships to individualistic thinking, where the teamwork attitudes are more of a unified thought process. In Table 1, teamwork and group work are separated into two sections.

### TABLE 1 TEAMWORK / GROUP WORK ATTITUDES

**TEAMWORK**
- Team performance is contextual
  - Writing a paper
  - Making a presentation
  - Organizing an event
  - Winning a competition
- Must possess subject matter knowledge and teamwork skills
- Members need to want to belong to a team
- Teams possess more links to personal relationships between members
- Belonging to a team is more fun than belonging to a group
- Teams can/may slow down the individual
- Members need to be motivated to complete the tasks
- Must have adequate communication

**GROUPWORK**
- Clear tasks for individual to complete
- Added skill set help overcome individual weaknesses
- It takes time to complete group projects
- Division of labor can increase productivity
- Coordinating tasks can be difficult
- Performs best when a leader emerges
- Group work requires 3 specialties
  - Management Skills
  - Technical Skills
  - Writing Skills

After a lunch break and brief rest, the students gathered the review material that was distributed earlier and were asked to identify which teamwork evaluation criteria they thought were the most important to them. The list of attributes is included in Table 2.

Before the conclusion of the panel session, the students were asked to discuss how much should teamwork affect their individual grades, and which methods are fairer when evaluating group efforts. The students were also asked to make an approximation of what percentage of classes require group work.

All of the panelists agreed that over 75% of the classes they have been enrolled in required group work, which resulted in a group grade. The panel also agreed on the issue that it seems that classroom performance is focused on the individual, feedback methods for performance are more realistic when asked open-ended questions, and evaluations are better when using quantitative methods.

### CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE QUESTIONS

Although not totally representative of the entire student body, the three panelists provided applicable insights to the issues of teamwork and group work in college. Table 1 shows the attitudes side-by-side generated by the students. Table 2 shows how these three students would measure team effectiveness based on their experience and what they thought was appropriate for their current setting.

When the attitudes and conclusions are compared to Hoegl and Gemunden’s [1] Teamwork Quality Construct, links can be made to all six constructs: communication, coordination, balance of member contributions, mutual support, effort and cohesion. Hoegl and Gemunden[1] also raised the issue of personal success of team members leading to “increased motivation for participating in future team projects” (p. 439), meaning that if the team members are not individually successful in their own team efforts, then they will be less likely to perceive teamwork as a satisfying experience.

Questions that need further research to be answered from this research are: Are group projects being graded on the basis of team efforts or group efforts? Are the students acting as groups or teams? If group work is being graded on the basis of teamwork, does that negate individual efforts? Answers to these questions will help to create a deeper understanding of what the students are experiencing on a daily basis at IUPUI.
REFERENCES


