

# Question Selection Rationale <sup>506</sup>

(for Demonstration Readiness Assessment Test)

**Note:** Each of the questions focuses on one at least one issue that is critical to the successful implementation of any group-based teaching approach. The correct answers and some of the more important of these issues are summarized below.

1-4. You will be given class time for \_\_\_\_\_ .

**c. Promoting in-class (and avoiding outside-class) group work.** *a) in-class group work.* Requiring students to do group outside of class practically guarantees that students will complain about having to do more than their fair share of the work [partly because it is likely to happen]. Finding a time and a place to meet as a group is often so painful that students will choose to divide up the work so they won't have to meet. Thus, what appears to be a group product usually isn't. Instead it is likely to have been done by the one or two students who have the most to lose if the group doesn't complete its assigned work. *b) viewing a full-length feature film.* When students actually prepare for class, the time-sink of covering content is largely gone. As a result, it is possible to use class time for lots of interesting things.

5-8. As part of this course, you will be asked to rate the "group maintenance" contributions of \_\_\_\_\_ .

**a. Ensuring fairness in grading.** There are two important issues here. 1) Having a part of the course grade based on a peer evaluation provides one of the important keys to individual accountability to the groups [the other is using activities that provide data on members' level of preparation for group work]. 2) Evaluations only make sense when the "evaluators" have enough data on those they evaluate so that they can meaningfully distinguish genuine contributions. Having students evaluate non-group members would: a) Present them with a very difficult task—thus one that would be resisted and, b) increase the risk that the evaluations would be more of a popularity contest than a reward for substantive contributions.

9-12. Which (if any) of the following is an accurate with respect to the group maintenance scores and/or their impact on the course grade?

**b. Providing incentives for "honest" peer evaluations.** Students will take the easy way out (i.e., give everyone a high grade—alternative a) *if the system allows them to.* Using a combination of "forced-choice" peer evaluation procedure (thus making a false) and ensuring that peer evaluations only have an effect *within* groups (alternative b) provides a strong incentive for giving lower scores to group members who have done the least to help the group succeed. Further, even though students can follow the rules described in the syllabus and still have everyone in a group end up with the same score, they can't do it unless everyone wants it to come out that way. As a result, students seldom receive a good peer evaluation when they haven't earned it. In addition, it is important for students to realize that it is still possible for everyone in a group to get an A by doing well on the group assignments and by helping each other develop individual competencies (alternative C).

13-16. In addition to the course text and the assigned novels, you will need to read materials for this course that \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a. *You will have to find through your own individual research.* Since this is a foundation course, I try to make the reading materials easy to get so students can concentrate on mastering them.
- b. **Can be purchased at King's Copies.** Gives students an easy and low cost way to get the readings.
- c. *Are on reserve at the library.* I do *not* put the readings on reserve. I want students to bring their materials to class so that they will have them as reference materials as they work on the group application assignments.

17-20. The final exam for this course will \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a. *Will be a group (not an individual) exam.* I want a measure of individual ability to apply concepts. Otherwise, I run the risk of not getting data on how well I've achieved one of my primary objectives.
- b. *Consist of multiple-choice questions.* It's easier to assess higher-level thinking with essays.
- c. **Be based on a full-length feature film.** The film is a "case" for an application-based final exam.

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21-24. On any given group assignment or exam, the score for group members will be \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a. "Weighted" by a peer evaluation. This would be an ongoing barrier to group cohesiveness.
- b. **The same for each member.** Giving the same grade to everyone in the group provides a powerful incentive that for putting time and effort into group work. **Not** "counting" group sends the dysfunctional message that it isn't very important. Thus, it would be irrational to spend time and effort doing it.
- c. *Converted to a letter grade.* This would tend to keep students focused on grades rather than learning.
- d. *Pass/fail.* Many students won't take group work seriously unless it really "counts".

25-28. The grade "weights" for this course will be \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a. *Based on a majority vote of class members.* This would also eliminate the opportunity to build groups.
- b. **Determined by students.** Having a panel of student representatives determine the grading system for the class: 1) Accelerates the development of group cohesiveness, 2) Clarifies how the grading system works and 3) Eliminates most complain about grades (i.e., they "own" the process and the outcome).
- c. *Different for different groups.* This would have two disadvantages: 1) It would eliminate the need for the inter-group interaction in setting the weights **and** the opportunity to build group cohesiveness and 2) make the grading process extremely time consuming to for the instructor.

29-32. The minimum percentage of an individual student's grade in this course that can be based on individual performance is \_\_\_\_\_ .

- d. **all of the above** I like to give students as much latitude as possible in setting the grade weights and have learned that, because there are so many scores involved, I am always able to produce a distribution of grades that I feel comfortable with and students won't complain about.

33-36. The minimum percentage of an individual student's grade in this course that can be based on individual Readiness Assessment Test (RAT) scores is \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a. **0%.** This: 1) Sends a clear message that the function of these tests is primarily **diagnostic** (i.e., not evaluative), 2) Allowing this weight to be zero provides students with the opportunity to **voluntarily commit themselves to being responsible for completing reading assignments before coming to class.** (Note: They don't want to put "all their eggs in one basket—the final, and they realize they need to study for the team tests anyway so they always choose to count the RAT's for some portion of the individual component of the grade.)

37-40. The maximum percentage of an individual student's grade in this course that can be based on the total of the group Readiness Assessment Test (RAT) scores is \_\_\_\_\_ .

- c. **24%** I want to be sure that students understand the relationship of weights within and between the grade components. Since the group RAT's are 30% of the group score and the maximum weight for group scores is 80% of the total grade thus the correct answer is 24% (.3 x .8). **Note: This is NOT a good RAT question, however, because it focuses too much on detail/memorization.**

41-44. The first Readiness Assessment Test (RAT) that "counts" (this one doesn't) will be \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a. Given at the beginning of the next class period. I want to make it absolutely clear that there won't be a lecture over the material before the RAT's.
- b. Over the unit of material on Organizational Effectiveness. I want to make sure that students know that to read in preparation for the first RAT.
- c. After only one lecture over the first unit of material. If they pick this one then they will learn—before they have to learn the hard way—that they won't have the benefit of a lecture before they take the individual RAT.
- d. **a and b but, NOT C.** This is the correct answer