

Dim = Dimensie (Psychology)

Com = Communiqué (Communication Science)

Str = Stress (IBA , IEM)

Sir = Sirius (Health Sciences, Public Administration)

Eline = Eline de Ruiter (Internationalisation project manager & Study Advisor)

Chris = Chris van den Heuvel (Student Assessor BMS)

FR = free riding

What are your experiences with free riding?

When does it happen?

What did you do about it?

- STR: first module with 6 people and only 2 actually did something. Nothing happened with it, those 2 did the tasks of the others. We had a buddy check so they got a lower grade, but still passed, so still unfair.
- SIR: not the whole project, but during the deadline there was a sports championship so 1 guy thought it was more important to watch the game rather than working on the report. Not reported to the teacher.
- DIM: with FR they never say they are doing it, they hide it. They only take part in conversations so it looks like they are participating but when dividing the tasks, they take easier ones or less. 'Soft FR' he was still doing stuff but only the easy things. The group kind of facilitated it, as at the time the group didn't really realise it.

Have you done free riding yourself? What led you to do so?

- DIM: Yes, during 1 module due to personal circumstances. They told the group about it as well, they try their best but cannot do as much as they wanted to. Project group was upset about it and wanted to talk to the teacher about it but they still added a part. It is a perception thing, sometimes you have circumstances but then it is important to communicate it and find solutions together as a group. They did get a point lower but still passed, was also fair as they did still contribute something but less than the others. 'Are you really FR or is it perceived as such'. Teacher was involved after talking to the group together.
- DIM: group of 5, 2 did almost everything from statistics point and therefore they did less of the report. Afterwards, writing the report was easier than the statistics part, so it might not have been so fair after all. There was a conversation at the beginning of estimation for grades. It was not discussed whether it was perceived as FR by the rest of the group.
- DIM: accidental FR, sometimes you don't know in advance how much time certain tasks take so when dividing in the end it might not have been fair. The others might have perceived it as FR.

What solutions to free riding did you encounter? What was the effect?

- DIM: Guy in the project group did not do anything, tried texting but he left the group chat. Resorting to emailing, he said he had a lot of things going on. They tried to balance it, but it didn't work and they told the tutor. He was kicked out of the group. They told her what they tried but he was kicked out.
- DIM: One of the persons disappeared, they talked to teachers and didn't want to put the name on the report. They didn't want to be too mean because they felt like there was something going on in that person's lives. Dilemma. Buddy check systems are in place in some studies, for example who wrote which parts are recorded.
- DIM: Found out through someone else. Project group 3 people from the previous group, one was inactive unless they were specifically given a task. That was a tip and it was in a way a solution and it worked but it also means micromanaging.
- DIM: tutor approached group, one project member that missed the first lectures. How did they feel about it? Was a very good solution that the tutor deals with the group.
- STR: Strange, caused by the teacher. Random people assigned to groups, had to find group members via the group chat. They tried to contact the person but did not reply. They put on the report that that person did not contribute at all. Did not talk to the teacher, but it was already mentioned in person. It was already an issue, because the teachers made the group.
- DIM: Not from project groups, for committees. Agreements and expectations meetings in the beginning. This might also be something for project groups. Teachers can also maybe encourage this, to set expectations.

What would you like to see done about free riding?

- SIR: A lower grade for people that FR doesn't work because they will still pass probably. Maybe make a kind of contract to promise that they will do the work.
- STR: Maybe idealistic: argument is usually that something is going on or that they don't feel well. Might be more interesting to look at why people are FR, that might fix the issue. The perspective shouldn't be 'this person is FR and should be punished'.
- DIM: More meetings between the tutor and the group might also make it better, because the tutor should then see when someone is not up to date on the project.
 - More frequent tutor meeting
 - Tutor be in touch more
- DIM: The tutor should investigate more what it's about, that might be better than when a group is doing this by itself. This is because they might have negative feelings towards the group members. Tutors might need to be slightly trained.
- STR: Pessimistic view. FR can still pass with buddy checks, they should not. The system is nice, but it still gives an incentive for the FR to continue.

- SIR: Agrees with the previous statement of Stress. Sometimes people join meetings online, mic and cam off, and then the teachers don't ask that person a question and it feels like a bit of a useless meeting then.
- STR: Even though it can be a personal circumstances issue, it doesn't mean you should just be getting a free pass.
- DIM: Online meetings: even though they might not have a cam or mic on, the teacher then immediately also knows that they are not participating enough and not serious enough, so they are aware of it and can check with the rest of the project group. Tutor realised what was going on, tried to get more involvement, but unfortunately it did not work.
- SIR: If you tell professors, they first tell you to talk with your group (good thing), but if the professor would give a better warning it would encourage the students to start working, a bit of an authority figure.
- DIM: More regular meetings with tutors would help in addressing the issue earlier. Basically a mid-project check-in moment where you also talk about the group dynamics.

Anything else?

- DIM: FR is a very easy way to not work, therefore, online meetings are not the best way to work. It makes it hard to see who is working then and who is not. Tutor could give a heads up for the rules about online meetings.
- DIM: Toolkit for how to deal with FR in a project group might be nice.
- DIM: Online meetings: if you had a couple of meetings in person in the beginning and later on online, that works better. Working in a live document also works better.
- SIR: For participation in an online meeting, maybe require them to have the camera and mic on?
- DIM?: **how to prevent FR?**
 - DIM: Group work where you have clear expectations and deadlines.
 - COM: In advance might be smart to set the agreements for which grade you are aiming for. In the first two modules, it was taught a lot for COM.
 - DIM: Assigning clear roles within a project group, also making notes (assign someone that task). Make someone responsible for planning, leading the meeting as well as taking notes and reading notes.
 - STR: Discuss whether you want the random groups, which pose a higher risk of FR. Might be a thing to be discussed within programmes.
 - COM: If you get to pick your own group mates, you tend to pick the ones you like better and trust more.
 - DIM: It helped to not wait for people to take on tasks. Instead they made a list of tasks with a similar amount of work and then divided it equally among the group members.
 - DIM: One module they were given a questionnaire in the beginning (strengths and weaknesses). That can also help when people know

more about and are more aware about what their weaknesses and strengths are. It also helps with setting expectations.