Social Loafing in Academia: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Instructors’ Behaviors in the Classroom

Damon E. Chapman & Daniel Cochece Davis

Abstract

The use of people working in groups to accomplish goals (or tasks) is prevalent in society and they exist in business situations, social or religious gatherings, in sports and, of course, in classrooms. What makes groups work effectively? This study reviews factors that both promote as well as obstruct effective group performance, and it focuses on one of the many factors that hinder a group’s ability to perform as best it can: social loafing. “Social loafing” is the phenomenon of individuals in group situations doing less work, putting in less effort or expending less energy on the group project than they would if they did the work alone. It is common in many different situations and research has shown that it transcends cultures. This study looked at the problem from the instructor’s point of view and measured the level of instructor awareness of social loafing in university classroom groups in both Japan and the United States. It hypothesized that instructors are unaware of several ways of diminishing social loafing in student groups. It also asked what, if any, preventative steps instructors take to diminish social loafing in student groups? Results showed that the vast majority of instructors on both sides of the Pacific are aware of the concepts of social loafing and free-riding. Furthermore, results support the notion that instructors should be more aware of techniques to curb loafing and that Japanese instructors tend to take a less active role in curbing social loafing than their American counterparts. Suggestions on how teachers can curb loafing and then suggestions for future research are also given.

Introduction

Group work is commonplace in most societies. As members of society, people belong to groups in any number of circumstances. It can be as simple as being a member of a family group discussion, in a church or other religious group, in a business meeting, on a sports team, in a classroom, or in any number of other situations. Certainly, in the academic area, group projects in the classroom are relatively common occurrences, regardless of the level of education. In the classroom, group work does not only build up students’ social skills, it is also a way to make a positive difference in learning. Tasks (or problems) that require the utilization of knowledge tend to give groups an advantage over individuals. There is more information experience in a group than in any one of its members, and groups tend to provide a greater number of approaches to solving any particular problem.

In the academic arena, there is one overriding goal under which groups are formed: goal (or task) achievement. Why are groups effective tools for accomplishing tasks? In brief, groups allow people to
take advantage of a wider array of ideas, a broader knowledge base, and more experience. They provide an effective way to build consensus, and they are an effective way of communicating complex information. Conversely, groups have negative side effects as well: they allow only one person to communicate at a time ("blocking") and they are often controlled by dominant people. That is, the most talkative person talks 40% of the time, the next dominant speaks up about 20% of the time, while other members get 10% speaking time, making it an exponential drop off (Ratzburg, 2002). In addition, there are also status differentials. The status of individual members (or the organization that formed the group) can create situations where the “wrong” person is doing all the talking. Motivation, or lack of, can also be a hindering factor in group effectiveness. It leads to, if it is not synonymous with, social loafing. This occurs when group members think “well if everyone else is contributing then I don’t have to work quite so hard.” Other potential problems in groups include the necessity of coordination (creating agendas, priorities, meetings, and scheduling of such arrangements), and the well-known phenomenon of groupthink: peer pressure to conform to the group (Ratzburg, 2002). This paper will look at the issue of effective groups in academic settings. Specifically, it will focus on one significant force which hinders group performance and effectiveness: social loafing.

Why do some people in groups do much less work than other individuals within the same group? More importantly, what is the role of instructor (or the manager or facilitator in non-academic groups) in such groups where social loafing exists? Are they ignorant of the loafing? Or do the facilitators and instructors have no awareness of tactics available to them to curb or prevent the loafing? This paper will analyze such situations, specifically focusing on social loafing in academic groups and the awareness, prevention and compensation of said behavior on the part of the instructors. To do so it will first discuss what groups are best suited to an academic environment and the factors that make potential group performance a reality. It will then review the forces that hinder effective groups, focusing on the concept of social loafing (its prevalence and causes). Social motivation, social facilitation and culture are then addressed, as is the role social loafing has in academia. Ways to curb or prevent social loafing are reviewed before teachers’ awareness of loafing in Japan and the U.S. is measured. Lastly, a discussion of the results and future areas of research are given. As such, this paper can and should be considered a continuation of social loafing research in the academic arena begun by Chapman and Davis (2000) and Davis, Chapman and Jaffar (2000).

Effective Academic Groups: Making Potential Group Performance a Reality

How can classroom groups be most effective? "The truly committed cooperative learning group is probably the most productive instructional tool educators have. Creating and maintaining truly committed cooperative learning groups, however, requires an understanding of the differences between cooperative learning groups and other forms of classroom grouping, the factors hindering group performance, and the basic elements that make cooperative work." (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1993, p.35). Not all groups, of course, are cooperative groups. Assigning people to a group, stuck in the same room, and telling them to ‘be cooperative’ does not a cooperative group make. Study groups, project groups, committees, task forces, small departments, and councils are groups, but not necessarily cooperative, and they do not become cooperative simply because someone labels them as such. On the basis of their findings, Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1993), developed a learning group performance curve to clarify the difference between types of learning groups.
The learning group performance curve illustrates that how well any small group performs depends on how it is structured. On the performance curve, four types of learning groups are described. It begins with the individual members of the group and illustrates the relative performance of these students to pseudo groups, traditional classroom groups, cooperative learning groups, and high performance cooperative learning groups (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1993). The following is a brief review of such groups.

A pseudo-learning group is a group where people have been instructed to work together, but have little, if any, interest in doing so. They meet but do not want to, nor do they care much about the success of the group. Members often block or interfere with each other’s learning, communicate poorly, confuse each other, loaf, and/or seek a “free ride.” The interaction among group members detracts from individual learning without delivering any benefit. The result is that the sum of the whole is less than the potential of the individual members. The group makes no progress since members have little commitment or interest in the group and its members.

A traditional classroom learning group is a group whose members accept the fact that they must work together but have little understanding of the benefit of doing so. Interdependence is low. The assignments are such that little if any joint work is required. Students in this type of group take little responsibility for anyone’s learning other than their own. Members interact primarily to share information and clarify how the assignments are to be done, then move away to work on their own. In these groups, the achievements are usually recognized and rewarded individually. Students are accountable as separate individuals, not as members of a single team. They receive little training in social skills, and a group leader is usually appointed to take charge of directing members’ participation. There is no check or measurement of the quality of the group’s efforts.

A cooperative learning group is more than a sum of its parts. It is a group whose members are committed to the purpose of getting the most out of each other’s learning. A high-performance cooperative learning group is a group that meets all the criteria for being a cooperative learning group and outperforms all reasonable expectations, given its membership (a significant achievement!). What differentiates the high-performance group from the cooperative learning group is the level of commitment members have to each other and the group’s success. Members’ mutual concern for each other’s personal growth enables high-performance cooperative groups to perform far above expectations, and also to have lots of fun. The bad news about high-performance cooperative groups is, not surprisingly, that they are rare. Most groups never achieve this level of development. (For full details on the above groups, refer to Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1993, and Johnson & Johnson, 1995).

**Forces Hindering Group Performance**

Individual performance and small groups go hand in hand. Although cooperative groups outperform individuals working alone, there is nothing magical about groups. There are conditions under which groups function effectively, and conditions under which groups function ineffectively. Potential barriers to group effectiveness (Johnson & Johnson, 1994) include:

1. Lack of group maturity. Group members need time and experience together to develop into an effective group. Temporary, ad-hoc groups usually do not function with full effectiveness.
2. Uncritically giving one dominant response. A central barrier to higher-level reasoning and deeper-
level understanding is the uncritical giving of members’ dominant responses to academic problems and assignments.

3. Social loafing (or “hiding in the crowd”). When individual members can reduce their effort without other members realizing that they are doing so, many people tend to work less hard.

4. Free riding. When group members realize that their efforts are dispensable and when their efforts are costly, group members are less likely to exert themselves on the group’s behalf.

5. Motivation losses due to perceived inequity (not being a “sucker”). When other group members are free riding, members are more likely to reduce their efforts to avoid being a “sucker.”

6. Groupthink. A group can be overconfident in itself and resist any challenge. The members may have a strong sense of invulnerability by avoiding disagreements and seeking (often overly quick) concurrence among members.

7. Lack of sufficient heterogeneity. The more homogeneous the group members, the less each one adds to the group’s resources. Heterogeneity ensures that a wide variety of resources are available for the group’s work.

8. Lack of teamwork skills. Groups with members who lack the small-group and interpersonal skills required to work effectively with others often underperform their most academically able members.

9. Inappropriate group size. The larger the group, the fewer the members who can participate, the less essential each member views his or her personal contribution, the more teamwork skills required, and the more complex the group structure.

Not every group is effective. Most everyone has been part of a group that wasted time, was inefficient, and generally produced poor work. But there are groups that accomplish wondrous things. Educators must be able to see the characteristics of ineffective groups and take action to eliminate them. (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1993). With this overview of effective groups given, this paper turns to the central focus of this project, one of the bigger factors that hinder effective group performance: social loafing.

**Social Loafing: The Concept**

Groups, ideally, work with minimal interference by adopting independent roles which, collectively, come together as more then the sum of its parts, something known as “synergy.” Although groups often extol the virtues of “synergy” within their members, and loudly proclaim the power of it in accomplishing group goals, the reality of group experience often lies more in the lack of coordination and effort among group members. This phenomenon, noted in the earlier section, is called “social loafing.” Under continuous observation, a high percentage of group members would prefer to sit back, that is, loaf, and let someone else work on their behalf. This social loafing can be a serious problem in classrooms (and various settings where group projects take place) because it heavily constrains the interaction necessary for a productive learning environment. Furthermore, the conditions that produce social loafing can prevent the development of the social fabric that is necessary for effectively functioning learning groups. More assertive members will inevitably “take charge” and, by doing so, will both reduce the need for additional input and create a sort of a ‘caste’ system in which quieter members often feel that their ideas might not be welcomed (Michaelsen, Fink & Knight, 1997).

In short, “social loafing” is the phenomenon of individuals in group situations doing less work, participating to a lesser degree, putting less energy or effort into the group project than they would if
they did the work alone (Latané, Williams, & Harkins, 1979). Social loafing is a common occurrence in many different situations from tasks requiring cognitive effort (e.g. brainstorming), to work involving physical effort or labor (e.g. see Latané & Darley, 1966). The term “social loafing” is relatively new, evolving as recently as 1979 (see Latané, Williams & Harkins, 1979), but research in this area goes back nearly 100 years.

Social loafing is a group-level phenomenon, it cannot occur at the individual level (at the individual level, it is known as “procrastination,” “laziness,” or a similar term) (Davis, Chapman & Jaffar, 2000). It deals with the reduction or increase of the energy level, or effort, put into the group project by each individual in the group. Related to social loafing is the concept of “free riding” (Marwell & Ames, 1979, 1980), a specific area of research within the category of social loafing literature which addresses the problem of individual group members trying to gain the benefits of group work. Specifically, free riding describes an individual, usually one who has less investment in the outcome of the group task, who abstains from using much energy on the group task, thereby getting a “free ride” off the energy of fellow group members. A related phenomenon is the “sucker effect”, where one person in the group does the majority of the work rather than receiving the low group evaluation. For this person (the “sucker”), the burden of extra work is justifiable, if not necessary, because this individual has a higher investment in the task, or the outcome of the group, than other members. Because it deals with reductions or increases in individual energy expenditure within group tasks, social loafing, the group level phenomenon closely tied to motivation levels of group members toward accomplishing the task, subsumes both the “free rider” and the “sucker effects”.

**The Prevalence and Causes of Social Loafing Across Groups**

Social loafing exists in many different types of tasks. A thorough literature review of this research can be found in Davis, Chapman and Jaffar (2000), but a brief review is necessary here. Past research demonstrates the effect on tasks which require physical effort such as rope-pulling (Ingham, Levinger, Graves & Peckham, 1974), shouting (Latané et al., 1979), and pumping air (Kerr & Bruun, 1981). Theoretically, the group effort should be close to the sum of each individual’s effort. Indeed, traditional group theory and research has consistently maintained that a “synergy” exists in groups, such that the output of the group is greater than the sum of the individual efforts but social loafing, it turns out, is far more common for people in groups. Social loafing research empirically establishes that when individual efforts are compared to the collective effort provided by the group, the group output is less than the sum of the individuals’ efforts.

The social loafing effect is quite robust. It appears not only in physical tasks, (mentioned above), but can be identified on tasks requiring cognitive effort (e.g., brainstorming and vigilance) as well (e.g., Harkins & Petty, 1982). In addition, Latané and Darley (1966) found social loafing types of behavior in coordination with a phenomenon known as “bystander apathy” (the act of observing an emergency, though doing nothing to alleviate the situation). Among members of religious organizations, Wicker (1969) discovered that the level of each member’s participation decreased as the size of the entire congregation increased.

In a very recent study related to the output of the group (not detailed in the aforementioned study by Davis, Chapman & Jaffar, 2000) McKinlay, Procter and Dunnett (1999) did two studies on the effects of computer-mediated communication on social loafing in brainstorming tasks and social
compensation in decision-making tasks. In the first experiment, production blocking, in which brainstorming group members interfere with each other's individual output, was minimised, but the nominal group still outperformed the other groups. In another experiment, subjects performed a group decision task in face-to-face and computer-mediated communication conditions. Social compensation in the presence of social loafing occurred in the first condition, but not in the second. Although focusing on the compensation of loafing between face-to-face vs. computer mediated conditions, it confirms that output is a factor in determining when loafing actually takes place. Social loafing is clearly prevalent across tasks, and is triggered by some variable in the group. Gradually, questions of what these triggering variables are, and how to compensate for them, became the driving force behind much of the subsequent social loafing literature.

As early as Triplett's (1898) and Ringelmann's (1913) work, researchers have sought to identify the causes of social loafing. Wicker's research (1969) concludes that although the larger congregations of religious groups seemed to be more active, the members of the smaller congregations were actually more productive, and that size seemed to facilitate a reduction in effort by members. Williams, Harkins and Latané (1981) found that people loafed when everyone's outputs were pooled together, allowing individual inputs to be "lost in the crowd." Because none of the participants could be held personally accountable for their individual efforts, loafing was not detectable and, therefore, occurred.

Clarifying the identification element even further, Harkins and Jackson (1985) concluded that when participants' individual outputs were identifiable, they generated more uses than when their outputs were pooled, but only when individuals believed their efforts would be compared to the performance of others in the group. That is, some sort of meter was necessary to gauge relative output of each individual (See Harkins & Szymanski, 1988; Szymanski & Harkins, 1987). Where Williams et al. (1981) came to the conclusion that identifiability of an individual's output is a crucial factor in eliminating social loafing, Brickner, Harkins, and Ostrom (1986) found that participants did not loaf whether the group's output was pooled or not, but when they believed they would be personally affected by the group's outcome. Consistent with previous research, however, was the finding that when personal involvement was not a factor, participants did loaf unless they were identifiable.

Another approach to the causes of social loafing came from Steiner (1966), who identified two possible causes of the group effect of social loafing (negative "non-summativity"): coordination loss and motivation loss. Motivation loss is more closely tied to, if not actually another name for, social loafing. Here, group members are less motivated to exert their energy to its fullest, thinking "someone else will make up the difference," or "my effort doesn't matter." Beyond this, other factors facilitating motivation loss include: a) lack of investment in task outcome, b) lack of interest in task, c) non-identifiability of individual output (i.e., all rewards for accomplishment given out at group-level only), d) lack of exertion comparability with other group members (i.e., non-competitive or comparative situation), and e) dispensability of effort (i.e., it's not necessary for group achievement).

In short, social loafing phenomena exist across several situations and types of groups and can be considered pervasive phenomena. Social loafing phenomena appear to be facilitated by situations where individual contributions are not identifiable nor indispensable, where no meter or standard exists for evaluating an individual's contribution, and where the overall group goal has little or no intrinsic value to the individual member. Collectively, this type of research focuses on group communication, and the energy investment dynamics among its members. Kerr (1983) provides a succinct
psychological definition: "An inverse relationship between group size and member motivation" (p.819). As opposed to "free-riding" and/or the "sucker effect," social loafing has become a category of group phenomena as well as a specific phenomenon, dealing with reductions or increases in individual energy expenditures on group tasks. At the specific level, social loafing is closely tied to motivation levels of group members toward accomplishment of a group task (cf. Steiner, 1966). Given that motivation is so prominent in the discussion of social loafing, that topic must be addressed.

**Social Motivation, Social Facilitation & Culture: A Connection to Social Loafing**

All groups require a certain level of motivation in order to achieve the task at hand. It could come from a leader, an outspoken individual (perhaps one who willingly makes up for others' lesser motivation), or from a combination of members in the group. Regardless of the source, motivation in the group, or loss of it, directly affects whether or not social loafing in group situations exists. The overriding principle of social motivation is order (Edwards, 1999). Humans as a species want to maintain their place in the social order and do so by adjusting their behavior accordingly. Social motivation refers to the activation of these adjustments as a result of contact with other individuals. Research in social motivation has led to the development of theories regarding the behavior of individuals in a group. Essentially, when placed in group settings, individuals will perform certain behaviors to maintain their place within the group. When an audience is present, individuals experience evaluation apprehension - the feeling that he/she is being judged by the rest of the group as to whether he/she "fits in." The typical result of this phenomenon is to either cause the individual to take action to form a good impression on the group, or to refrain from behaviors that might embarrass or otherwise ostracize the individual from the group. When the presence of a group motivates an individual to pursue a behavior for the purpose of impression, it is called social facilitation (LaMonica, 2001).

Social facilitation occurs when 1) the presence of others creates arousal and 2) this arousal strengthens the dominant response so that 3) on an easy task, performance is enhanced, while on a difficult task, performance is impaired (Baron, 1986; Caruso, 2002). Social facilitation is said to occur on tasks where individual performance can be recognized (a key factor in research suggesting that in order to curb social loafing in groups, individual contributions must be recognizable). Caruso (2002) further adds explanations for the existence of social facilitation: 1) the simple presence of other members of the species is sufficient to produce social facilitation; 2) the presence of others produces social facilitation only when they are perceived as potential evaluators; and 3) the presence of others produces social facilitation only when those others distract from the task and compete for the person's attention. Social loafing, on the other hand, is the phenomenon of apparent *motivation loss* of individuals in groups. It is more likely to occur if performance cannot be individually evaluated, and the presence of others will be relaxing, which decreases performance on simple tasks and improves it on complex ones (Baron, 1986).

Clearly, motivation, or loss of it, can be a significant factor in determining the causes of social loafing in groups. In general, research has found that the nature of the task or discussion within the group will determine whether an individual will experience social facilitation or social loafing. When the task is interesting, interactive or otherwise involving, an individual is more prone to experience social facilitation. This is especially true if the individual feels a personal affinity or particular talent for the
task. Tiring, uninteresting, or meaningless tasks usually elicit social loafing as a normal response. Social loafing appears to be more of a motivated avoidance behavior than a specific loss of motivation (Munro, Schumaker, & Carr, 1997). As LaMonica (2001) states, classroom dynamics lends credibility to the theory:

It would seem clear that, when placed in a new class of strangers, learners take actions [in order] to be accepted by the group. When the task or topic at hand is difficult, or something about which the learner feels insecure, he/she tends to refrain from asking questions, or performing other behavior that might demonstrate his/her ignorance and subsequent possible inappropriate placement in the class. On the other hand, when the topic or task at hand is something about which he/she knows much or is highly skilled, he/she tends to want to “show off” his/her ability by contributing to the discussion, demonstrating his/her skill or otherwise impress his/her expertise on the classroom group for approval (p.3).

What is it about groups that motivates individuals, causes them to engage in social facilitation or, on the other hand, social loafing? Many factors can exert an influence on and interact with the motivational level of a learner. As educators, we are charged with the responsibility of identifying those factors affecting learners in our classrooms and manipulating them to produce positive results - learning and retention. Successfully pinpointing and working with these factors requires a unique understanding of their nature and effects. Culture is one such factor. After all, besides one’s family, isn’t one’s cultural group “a place in which one finds one’s niche in the general social order, [and isn’t this] a basic human need? This basic need translates nicely into the classroom, providing a basis for why students may experience social motivation among peers in a learning group” (LaMonica, 2001, p.4).

Furthermore, “We know that culture, that deeply learned mix of language, beliefs, values, and behaviors that pervades every aspect of our lives, significantly influences our motivation. In fact, social scientists today regard the cognitive processes as inherently cultural. The language we use to think, the way we travel through our thoughts, and how we communicate cannot be separated from cultural practices and cultural contexts...If we keep culture in mind, a useful functional definition of motivation is to understand it as a natural human process for directing energy to accomplish a goal” (Wlodkowski, 1999, p.2.). How that energy is directed and at what level may be a direct result of the culture of each individual learner. Because this paper deals with both U.S. and Japanese learning groups, the topic of Eastern vs. Western cultures is discussed below.

**Motivation and Culture: Western vs. Eastern Societies**

Although focusing on motivating people in their workplace, LaMonica (2001) offers some insight into the different reasons for motivation between Western and Eastern cultures. Motivating people in Western society is based on an understanding of work motivation. Managers seem to believe that work itself is not and cannot be intrinsically motivating and so they seek methods of improving workers’ personal satisfaction through incentives. Likewise, in classrooms everywhere, instructors scramble to locate means to motivate learners through incentives such as grades, certificates and degrees. Research in loafing suggests that incentives can curb loafing in groups.

In Eastern cultures, the concept of motivation is viewed somewhat differently and motivating employees is not viewed the same as it is in Western civilizations. In these societies, motivating people
comes not from extrinsic incentives, but from "such non-materialistic properties as trust, altruistic sentiments, norms of reciprocity, and a moral duty obliging them to act and perform out of a spirit of spontaneous consensus" (Munro, Schumaker & Carr, 1997, p.121.) Examples of this notion are given below. The reader should note that although the empirical work in this research focuses on the U.S. and Japan, the brief example of China below is given to enlighten the reader of more than one Eastern culture.

**Japan**

The driving force of the Japanese motivational approach is trust. Because of the belief in a future reward for all as a result of their commitment, workers in the Japanese factory were found to be highly motivated and committed to their company in spite of low work satisfaction (Dore, cited in Munro, Schumaker & Carr, 1997.). This case "illustrates further the orientation of Oriental workers. They are motivated not only out of individualistic striving for self-interest but also by a collectivistic consciousness of the 'commonwealth'..." (Munro, Schumaker & Carr, 1997, p.122.)

Given that part of culture is belonging to a group, by creating an inclusive environment, the instructor of academic groups sets the stage for students to become part of a learning community. Providing stimulating, interactive and various activities, the instructor can encourage social facilitation among the members of the group (LaMonica, 2001). Avoiding uninteresting, irrelevant activities, the instructor may avoid promoting social loafing and subsequent isolation of any student in the classroom (a similar position on task attractiveness is supported by Zaccaro, 1984). By taking steps to ensure a respectful, open atmosphere, "intrinsic motivation can emerge because people can be authentic and spontaneous and can accept full responsibility for their actions" (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p.62).

Eliciting intrinsic motivation is the key to creating a classroom environment that is sensitive and responsive to culture. Taking a cue from Eastern Culture, educators and their students can benefit from going about the business of generating intrinsic motivation in students by fostering trust, connection, acceptance and a sense of place in the classroom. One researcher suggests that loafing is less likely to occur when those working are from Eastern cultures rather than Western cultures (Caruso, 2002). Whatever the connection between culture and motivation in groups, establishing inclusion in groups is the first step in the process of building trust and a sense of belonging classrooms (LaMonica, 2001).

**China**

In China, the focus of motivating individuals (in the workplace) is on moralistic duty. Beginning as young as their childhood, young learners are taught or instilled with a high sense of moral obligation and familial role. Individuals are encouraged to recognize their moral duties to perform, whether in the workplace, the classroom, or at home. In this culture, all people work together for the good of the many, versus the Western approach of working primarily for the self. (Munro, Schumaker & Carr, 1997.)

**Social Loafing In Academia**

While organizational interests remain important, the pervasiveness of social loafing within the educational context has been largely overlooked. Given such an extensive array of ammunition with
which to combat social loafing, it is somewhat surprising that it still exists within the academic context. Yet, it is likely that most participants in academic communities have encountered social loafing in some form. Ironically, the majority of participants in social loafing research, by far, have been students. Additionally, the primary scholars of social loafing research are all affiliated with universities, and one could easily assume that they are probably instructors who may assign group projects as part of their students' course work. The pervasiveness of students working together in groups exists across most, if not all, educational majors, as well as across many cultures. Oddly, researchers of social loafing have neglected to study these naturally-occurring, naturally-developing groups. Instead, the research focus of social loafing has been on groups of students participating together for the first time (i.e., zero history groups) on artificially-created projects having little, if any, intrinsic value to the participants or their educational goals (e.g., shouting, clapping hands, brainstorming on a given topic, et cetera).

One exception to the body of non-academic work was done by North, Linley and Hargreaves (2000) on loafing in a co-operative classroom task. They found that social loafing existed in a collaborative educational task employing groups of three and eight students. Results from this study showed that students working in smaller groups were more productive than those in larger groups (something which was found in previous literature in a business context).

Linked to this idea of collaborative learning, Bacon (2002) is currently doing work on the idea of "collaborative loafing." He notes that in most learning environments the goal is learning itself, perhaps measured by an individual exam or assignment. In the group context, it's reasonable to assume that the reward a student receives will be proportional to the effort the student contributes. In the typical business student group project, however, the students often receive the same reward, regardless of individual efforts (i.e., a group grade). Social loafing is commonly observed in situations with group rewards and lack of individual accountability (Comer, 1995), and the presence of social loafers, or free-riders, is often a source of conflict in student groups (Strong & Anderson, 1990; Bacon, Stewart & Silver, 1999). In more functional student groups, the students split the workload more evenly and perform their assigned tasks, with each individual having a reduced workload as a result of working as a team. The tendency to divide the workload among the group in order to reduce one's individual effort might be called collaborative loafing. Bacon (2002) is in the process of testing the following theory: If learning is a function of effort or time-on-task, then students who engage in social loafing or collaborative loafing would be expected to learn less than students working alone.

Besides these very limited studies on loafing in academia, Chapman and Davis (2000) and Davis, Chapman and Jaffar (2000) did some cross-cultural studies on the prevalence of social loafing in academic groups in Malaysia, Japan and the U.S. Focusing on the problem of loafing (including the concept of "free loading") from the student perspective, those studies focused on the following areas: a) how prevalent social loafing is among naturally-occurring student groups; b) what the students do when they encounter social loafing in one of their groups; and c) what students perceive their instructors doing to prevent social loafing from occurring within these student groups.

Results showed that loafing was not only prevalent in the U.S. (Davis, Chapman & Jaffar, 2000) where most of the research takes place, but that it is clearly prevalent in Malaysia, Japan and the U.S. (Chapman & Davis, 2000). That is, the phenomenon is not simply an artifact of American life/culture. Descriptive statistical analyses revealed that a majority of students (73%) have experienced group
members engaging in social loafing. Though participants estimated the social loafer’s contribution at “barely anything”, they also indicated that their instructors also did little to prevent social loafing from occurring. The majority of participants had heard of both “social loafing” and “free riding” prior to the study. Ironically, however, the lowest percentages of participants having heard of either concept was in the United States, where the majority of research on social loafing phenomena have been conducted.

While these results showed students believe that instructors seemed to do little to curb this imbalance on behalf of the group and its assigned task, it also confirmed that a large majority of the participants indicated that they, themselves, compensated for the social loafing situation by often ignoring the free-riding student and doing her/his work themselves, instead of investing additional energy attempting to get the free-rider involved in the task and perform her/his designated group duties/work. Thus, as predicted, students are aware of other students’ social loafing behaviors, as well as the consequences of those perceptions, and students believe that instructors fail to intercept when in contact with social loafing. These results seemed to indicate either an apathy on the part of instructors, a lack of awareness about what goes on in their own courses, or a general lack of knowledge about what can be done to counteract social loafing in assigned course work. If either of the former are true, then one must question why this person choose to enter teaching as a profession. If the latter is the case, the instructor is referred to a list of compensation strategies (see Davis, Chapman & Jaffar, 2000, as well as a brief review below) as a guide to some of the options available for counteracting this group dynamic. Most participants in the survey, however, indicated that they did not report social loafing free-riders to their instructors. Arguably, however, this lack of reporting could stem from most students believing that instructors will not take action to curb the problem. Furthermore, it could be that students are reluctant to approach instructors with reports of social loafers because of the way that it may reflect upon their own characters (e.g., getting a reputation as a “tattle-tale” or “snitch,” appearing as if they can’t deal with conflict by themselves, a “whiner,” etc.).

Additionally, the results which showed that students ignore fellow group members who are loafing or free-riding indicate either: a) a frustration with social loafers in student groups, b) an acceptance that social loafers are a part of any group experience, or c) a willingness to compensate for others’ lack of energy investment in order to attain one’s own goals (e.g., a high grade in a course). If either “a” or “b” are the case, then one must look, again, at the role of the instructor in preventing social loafing. If social loafing is so prevalent among students’ group work that it is causing students great frustration, or making them believe social loafing is a natural product of working in groups, students may ending up believing that: a) instructors don’t care enough about their students to ascertain who is actually working and who is not, or b) instructors aren’t involved enough in the work for which they are hired in order to monitor what goes on in their own course. In either case, students may come away from their educational experience with a lower opinion of their instructors and, perhaps, their academic institutions.

Curbing the Effect of Social Loafing

Some researchers have focused their efforts on how to compensate social loafing. Williams and Karau (1991) found when workers’ expectations of co-worker ability/performance were low, the workers were more likely to compensate for the perceived deficiency in order to get a positive
evaluation for themselves and the group. In contrast, Jackson and Harkins (1985) found that individuals will exert the same effort they perceive their co-workers to be exerting (see Hardy & Crace, 1991). To maintain equity, a person's perceptions about their own efforts and those of their fellow workers will cause the person to either increase or decrease their own efforts. Contrary to the findings of Williams, Harkins & Latané (1981), Harkins and Jackson (1985) argued that identifiability, alone, was not sufficient to eliminate social loafing. They believed that the potential for evaluation and comparison may motivate one's performance and eliminate social loafing (see also Harkins & Jackson, 1985). Strengthening the case for evaluation, Harkins and Szymanski (1987) showed that evaluations from within the group were as effective as self-evaluation or evaluations by an outside source, such as the experimenter (see also, Bartis, Szymanski & Harkins, 1988; Harkins & Szymanski, 1989). Sanna (1992) established a relationship between feedback, expectancy levels and social loafing. When participants received positive feedback, performance expectancies were higher and social loafing decreased. Negative feedback, however, led to lower levels of performance expectancies and subsequently, higher levels of social loafing.

Other research studied the effect of the instructor on group work and factors which affected the experience of being on a "team" (or group project). Besides longevity of the team experience and self-selection of people in the group, Bacon, Stewart and Silver (1999), for example, found that the clarity of the instructions to the team on the part of the instructor all positively affected the team experiences. Contrary to previous findings, however, they found that the use of peer evaluations was negatively associated with good team experiences (cf. Harkins and Szymanski, 1987 & 1989). Since this appears to conflict with above suggestions on curbing social loafing (which advises having group members provide feedback and evaluation to all other members of the group), does this mean the teachers role is superior to peer evaluations when assessing the "success" of the group?

Regarding other factors, Harkins and Petty (1982) discovered that making tasks seem more challenging, as well as assigning specific roles, reduces social loafing. Zaccaro (1984) established that attractive tasks, which are challenging and unique, cause groups to work harder, providing a stronger commitment to the job and to the group. The same study suggests that social loafing occurs in low task commitment groups because internal pressures for high achievement are low or absent altogether. Karau and Williams (1993) provide support for Zaccaro's (1984) findings on the effect of group size on collective efforts. Karau and Williams (1993) show decreases in social loafing when group members attach greater value to collective outcomes. However, they also argue that an increase in group size might raise the intensity of social loafing when members place greater value on strategic considerations. Matsui, Kakuyama and Onglatco (1987) also found that group goal setting facilitated group performance, as did effective feedback. Furthermore, they found that groups work at maximum effort when they set specific, challenging goals, and when receiving feedback. Matsui, et al. (1987) conclude that task feedback must involve both the performance of the individual and the group in order for it to be effective. Adding to the value of individual evaluation for each team member, Buckenmyer (2002) adds that it is unrealistic to give the same grade to each member (as business groups often do). Unless the team members have the means to discipline each other, social loafing will occur.

Shepperd (1993) devises three clear-cut solutions for social loafing. First, individuals should have incentives. Next, make contributions indispensable (cf. Kerr & Bruun, 1983); and, lastly, reduce the
cost of actively participating in the group task. Conversely, some of the counteractive measures used to curb levels of social loafing in groups focus on output evaluation and group size. These measures include: a) making individual output identifiable, b) making individual output comparable with other workers’ output, c) making individual task accomplishment indispensable for achievement of group task, d) rewarding excellence in individual task accomplishment, e) keeping group size to a minimum, and f) giving group members the power to “fire” an inactive member (i.e., threatening to use a “turkey clause” to fire a “free-rider”). Clearly, these solutions are communicative in their nature if not in their end goal. Thus, communication is the tool by which social loafing is curbed, if not eliminated.

Concerning group size, and its potential effects on facilitating or inhibiting social loafing, the rule of thumb has become: one person, one task, no more members than are needed. If each person has a specific task or role in the group, then her or his work output is identifiable. Once individual output is identifiable, then it becomes available for evaluation and potential reward. Finally, when outputs are identifiable and available for evaluation, only then can they become comparable. At a minimum, other group members (and supervisors and/or instructors) can evaluate individual performance in terms of activity or non-activity (i.e., is the person doing anything in her or his role and/or task?). As group size increases, however, the potential for redundancy in task/role increases as well and, once this occurs, the opportunity for social loafing develops. Finally, loafing, Caruso (2002) adds, is less likely to occur when those working on the task are women rather than men, and when those working are from Eastern cultures rather than Western cultures.

In summary, past research has suggested that the compensation mechanisms for diminishing the presence and/or effects of social loafing include: a) providing incentives (e.g., less work for those meeting deadlines); b) making each member’s contribution indispensable (i.e., the project cannot be completed unless everyone completes her/his part); c) making the cost of actively participating in the group minimal (i.e., contributions do not necessitate further contributions, large amounts of time or physical effort, etc.); d) feedback that is given to both the individual and the group, and this feedback is learning-oriented rather than performance-oriented; e) having group goals that are intrinsically valuable and relevant to each individual member of the group; f) making all individual contributions identifiable; g) making all individual contributions measurable by some objective, stable, meter; h) having group members provide feedback and evaluation to all other members of the group; and i) having group members with high-efficacy expectations (e.g., people who think “I can do this!”) (See Harkins & Petty, 1982; Jackson & Williams, 1985; Kerr & Brunn, 1983; Matsui, Kakuyama, & Onglatco, 1987; Sanna, 1992; Shepperd, 1993; Zaccaro, 1984). Finally, Jackson and Williams (1985) discovered that social loafing may not always be a bad thing. They found that social loafing may, in fact, underlie enhanced performances and possibly reduce stress when people work collectively on difficult tasks.

Having summarized the above mechanisms for countering social loafing, questions as to what, if any, strategies instructors use to curb or compensate for social loafing phenomena are in order. Are teachers aware when group members “hide in the crowd” in order to exert less effort when, or because, they know that someone else will pick up the slack in effort? Is identifiability of the contribution of each member enough to curb loafing? That is, if the instructor makes each persons’ contribution identifiable and measurable, will this reduce or eliminate social loafing? Harkins and Szymanski (1987) showed that evaluations from within the group were as effective as self-evaluation or
evaluations by an outside source, refuting the idea that the teachers’ evaluation is not necessarily superior (see also, Bartis, Szymanski & Harkins, 1988; Harkins & Szymanski, 1989). If, as Karau and Williams (1993) say, a group shows a decrease in social loafing when group members attach greater value to collective outcomes, should the teacher assign a group grade? Is this, in fact, the case?

Thus far, this paper has shown that social loafing exists across several types of groups, is pervasive and goes beyond national or cultural borders. It also showed, in the limited empirical work done, that most students do not believe their instructors do much to prevent social loafing in academic groups. The purpose of this paper is to explore the phenomenon of social loafing in an extension of the pilot work by the same authors described earlier. It seeks to address the huge gap in the social loafing literature by initializing a study of loafing as viewed by the teachers within the naturally-occurring groups they assign on their students. Specifically, this paper will examine the instructor’s awareness of social loafing among academic groups on university campuses in Japan and the United States.

Cross-Cultural Rationale

Why compare Japanese and U.S. groups? As previously noted, the vast majority of research in this area stems from the U.S. This paper takes the position that more research should be done to compare the cross-cultural differences between such influential countries, as well as between Asia and the West. Successful Asian countries must wage war against the “loafing culture,” states Akihiko Tanaka, Associate Professor of International Politics at the Institute of Oriental Culture at Tokyo University (Kathirasen, 1993). With this increased awareness of the problem on society as a whole, and the gap of such research in Japan, one must ask what recognition of loafing there is in Japanese academia? Japanese education has seen the declining academic performance of university students in recent years (The Japan Times, November 9, 1999). Mentioned earlier, Caruso (2002) suggests that loafing is less likely to occur when those working are from Eastern cultures rather than Western cultures, yet virtually no work has studied, let alone recognized, the problem of social loafing from the angle of the instructors within Japan.

Social Loafing: Cross-Cultural Definitions

Detailed earlier, “social loafing” is the phenomenon of individuals in group situations doing less work, participating to a lesser degree, and putting in this less energy affects the energy level, or effort, put into the group project by each other individual in the group. It is a group-level phenomenon, as it cannot occur at the individual level. Related to social loafing are the concepts of “free riding” and the “sucker effect.” Because it deals with reductions or increases in individual energy expenditure within group tasks, social loafing subsumes both the “free rider” and the “sucker effects”.

In Japanese society, social loafing is known, effectively, by three terms. One is “putaro,” or a person who is considered lazy; one who wastes time; one who “hangs around” doing nothing in particular; one who expels minimal energy in a given situation; and it often refers to an unemployed person. Similarly, “putaro suru” (doing something with no purpose). “Fura fura” translates as “doing something with no purpose.” When describing a person, the term “fura fura shiteiru hito” (フラフラしている人) is used (“hito” means person in
Japanese) to describe someone who tries to do nothing, or as little as possible in any given situation. That person tends to "goof off" in order to avoid having any personal responsibility on a given task. (Students who this researcher discussed the concept with commonly noted that they use it to refer to another student who comes to school out of necessity, but actually puts in zero energy. The student simply shows up in class, says nothing, and he/she may be assigned to a group project but offers no active participation). In short, this type of person will not participate in a task, but simultaneously does not expect any sort of reward from the task either. That type of person could be labeled by another term widely recognized in Japan: "binjo suru hito."

"Binjo suru hito" (便乗する人) is roughly translated as "free rider" (the English expression itself is sometimes used by Japanese speakers). This is a person (again, "hito" meaning person in Japanese) who gets a "free ride" from others; one who uses other people and their ideas so he/she doesn't require any active thought or participation of his/her own. Important to this definition, however, is the fact that the person attempts to get credit for others work or ideas. The verb form of this term is "binjo suru" meaning to use others, get a free ride, etc. The term applies in situations requiring cognitive effort (e.g. group projects, business projects with co-workers, brainstorming ideas, etc.), as well as situations requiring physical effort (e.g. going from place A to place B at another's physical or financial expense). With the necessary cross-cultural definitions given, a study of the situation from both sides of the Pacific is due.

Research Question & Hypothesis

Given what we know, and the inexcusable gap in research that exists from the perspective of the teachers, this study aims to take "social loafing" to the instructors. To study the problem from the teachers' perspective, this paper asks the following:

RQ: What do instructors do to diminish social loafing in student groups?

Additionally, given that social loafing exists in academic groups and it is believed that this social loafing exists because instructors do not take measures to curb it (e.g. making the group's goals intrinsically valuable and relevant to each member of the group or making all individual contributions identifiable), the following hypothesis is proffered:

H1: Instructors are unaware of several ways of diminishing social loafing in student groups.

Methodology

The survey, written in Japanese (see Appendix A), had been translated, and cross-translated from the English version (see Appendix B) by three native Japanese speakers, all fluent in the English language. The survey consisted of a series of 16 open-ended and closed-ended questions pertaining to teacher's awareness of past social loafing in academic situations in their classrooms. The Japanese surveys were distributed in the instructor's mailboxes at two small universities in Western Japan, and the data was collected in the autumn, 2001, as well as in the spring, 2002. All responses were anonymous. U.S. data was collected from instructors at a small, liberal arts college in the northeastern United States. All responses were anonymous. Overall, the data was collected over a period of 15 months.
Results & Discussion

A total of 89 individuals from Japan and the United States participated in the present study. Of the participants, 22 were from the United States, and 67 were from Japan (75% of respondents came from Japan, 25% from the U.S.). 64 of the participants (72%) were male, with the remaining 25 (28%) female. Participants' instructional rank in school was Professor (38 participants, 43%), Associate Professor (23 participants, 26%), Assistant Professor (21 participants, 23%), and Instructor (7 participants, 8%).

Overall, seventy percent (70%) of the participants (62 subjects) had heard of "social loafing" as a concept, and seventy-six percent (76%) of the participants (68 subjects) had heard of the "free-riding" concept. For a breakdown of this by location, see Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers (by location) who heard of:</th>
<th>Social Loafing</th>
<th>Free Riding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.: 16 (72.7%) yes, 6 (27.3%) no</td>
<td>U.S.: 17 (77.3%) yes, 5 (22.7%) no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan: 46 (69.7%) yes, 20 (30.3%) no</td>
<td>Japan: 51 (76.1%) yes, 16 (23.9%) no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With such a high percentage of instructors in both countries being aware of the problem, one must ask why more research hasn't been done on loafing in the classroom? When the numbers are broken down by sex, the numbers of males and females who have heard of the concepts "social loafing" and "free-riding" are basically the same. See Table 2.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers (by sex) who heard of:</th>
<th>Social Loafing</th>
<th>Free Riding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males: 45 (70.3%) yes, 19 (29.7%) no</td>
<td>Males: 50 (78.1%) yes, 14 (21.9%) no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females: 17 (70.8%) yes, 7 (29.2%) no</td>
<td>Females: 18 (72%) yes, 7 (28%) no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It seems that these concepts are not biased towards either gender. The awareness of these problems is, indeed, widespread. Similarly, when examining differences based on participant's sex and the question of "How often do you try to prevent this type of situation from occurring?" (survey question #12), no significant differences were found. Mean scores are: Female=3.29, Male=3.16. ANOVA shows an F (with 1, 37 df)=.065, p=.80, eta squared=.002, or less than 1% of the overall variance is associated with the variable of sex. That is, the differences between how male and female instructors attempt to stop loafing before it occurs is minimal. As a follow up to this question, for those instructors who replied that their frequency in trying to prevent loafing was something other than "never," qualitative responses were given. The replies are as varied as they are interesting, and reflect some awareness of how to curb loafing. (For a full listing of the qualitative responses, categorized by the authors, see Appendix C).

The largest portion of the teacher responses dealt with grading or evaluation of the group, its members or the project itself. Teachers gave both individual and group grades, used group feedback
sheets, did peer grading (from within the group) and one even did grading at the mid-point as well as at the end of the project. Most interesting of the ideas in this area was "I tell students that the group grade policy can be changed for any group with a free rider." What's unclear here is will the entire group be affected, or just the free-rider? Related to the topic of grading, this research sought answers to whether group or individual grading was more prevalent and whether one or the other was better at preventing loafing. Question six on the survey, which asked whether participant instructors gave groups an "individual" or "group" grade on classroom, failed to provide for a "both" option as the instructor's answer (The question reads "Do you typically give the group projects a single group grade, or is each group member graded individually?") As a result, it was deemed problematic. In spite of this oversight, some participants wrote in "both" or circled both options. Thus, results are reported here for exploratory purposes only, as the question cannot be considered valid as used. With that said, 14 participants (37%) reporting using only a group level grade for group projects, whereas 15 participants (40%) reported using an individual level grade for each member of a group assignment. Nine (24%) participants indicated using both individual and group level grades in their group assignments.

Other teacher responses about how teachers try to prevent loafing dealt with measuring a student's individual input (via work sheets) describing each student contribution and telling students that their non-participation could result in removal from the group. One teacher offered a way to combine measuring individual contribution via peer grading: "Each group member grades the contributions each has made. This is used to weight the group grade for each individual." Other ideas included meeting with the group to discuss how to work as a group before they get too far along; having private meetings with each team member; mediation to convey the problem to the loafing student; raising interest in the project; and encouraging students to be in a group by making smaller groups. Lastly, one instructor seemed to follow the OBWA method (observe by walking around) rather intensely, he/she gives "constant attention" to his/her group, something which may require more energy than instructors are prepared, or able, to give.

**Differences by Location**

When examining how location accounted for differences (Japan vs. the U.S.), the data show that location accounts for slightly more than 14% of the total activity associated with the variable of "How often instructors try to prevent social loafing." The means are U.S.=3.68, Japan=2.59. An ANOVA shows an F (1, 37 df)=6.16, p=.018, eta squared=.143. These results show that the Japanese instructors take a much less active role in preventing loafing from occurring in their classroom groups than do the American instructors. While this could be interpreted as an indication that Japanese instructors take a less active role in preventing social loafing in classroom groups, it would not be viewing the Japanese culture in its entirety. Another explanation could be that the students are letting down their groups, and the instructors leave it to the student groups to deal with it. In a culture where the idea of "losing face" in front of peers (let alone superiors) is avoided at all costs, the instructor may be letting the student "off." That is, if the instructor intervenes, that would "officialize" the loafing, and the student would lose much more "face" because it would be coming from a superior. Other reasons may also be based in culture. As Caruso (2002) suggested earlier, loafing is less likely to occur when those working in the groups are from Eastern cultures rather than Western cultures. One reason for this may be the
group-oriented culture that is more common in Eastern (Asian) countries, whereas Western cultures tend to stress the individual more than the group. Given this possibility, could not the Japanese instructors engage in more preventative measures (e.g. setting up specific parameters for what the group itself should do if loafing occurs)? If this is done, it could eliminate the need for the instructor to cause anyone to "lose face" due to instructor's intervention, while making the "group" responsible for itself within the classroom.

Another possibility could simply be a lack of awareness on the part of the teachers in Japan as to what their options are. Virtually no research could be found on the loafing phenomenon itself in Japanese literature, but Umezu (1978) advises teachers to be aware of their attitude toward student groups, and says teachers should be "a good advisor or counselor" to students because "they tend to lose their way" in school groups. This goes without saying, but what is not explained from Japanese research is how to keep students in line, or focused on the group. Kazutaka (1983), on the other hand, give a little more specific advice from the Japanese perspective. Along the lines of American research on group dynamics, he advises teachers to:

- develop dynamics in the group in order to form a type of "unity" in the "team" (group);
- be aware of the influences on the group, including students' attitudes toward the project; and
- increase student participation and collaboration on the given task (Kazutaka, 1983, p.66-68).

When detailing how to achieve these overarching goals, this Japanese scholar offers steps similar to those previously noted: increase students' motivation; give students incentives; and observe the group before, during and after they finish working together. Kazutaka (1983) than goes into detail on how, specifically, to make incentives for the students who participate in an academic group. He offers the following ideas: 1) make the task attractive; 2) put people of similar personalities and characters in the same group; 3) make clear goals and objectives that will lead to task completion; 4) improve the personal interaction between group members (e.g. by stressing "intergroup" cooperation or have an in-class group competition where the first group to achieve its goal is rewarded, etc.); 5) give specific activities which facilitate this group interaction; 6) show leadership, or allow the group to pick its own leader who will guide the group through the steps they need to achieve their goal(s); 7) structure the group to split the workload evenly; 8) provide a positive and enthusiastic atmosphere in both the classroom as well as in each group; and 9) specify the grading scale, date and time under which the project is to be done (Kazutaka, 1983, p.71-73). Written from a social-psychological perspective, Kazutaka (1983) follows volumes of work focused on group effectiveness and goes on to advise that a sense of belonging, or the "we feeling" as he calls it (p.117) is one of the main, if not the biggest, factor in group effectiveness. Many of these ideas, it can be argued, could also be effective in combating loafing (e.g. structure the group to split the workload evenly, thereby making each individual contribution accountable and measurable, or make the task attractive). These ideas are generally in line with research on what makes group tasks attractive, and most scholars would agree that they deserve merit.

Another Japanese researcher suggests that the expectation on the part of the teacher has a big role in the effectiveness of individual participation in groups. Kazunori (1996) notes that the teacher expectation effect is one of the biggest reasons for Japanese students to engage in human relationships and interactions in group activities. Without the teacher expectation, it could be argued, many students would lack the motivation to actively participate in the group project. The notion that if the
teacher expects the students to perform well, the students' level of performance actually increases is known as the Pygmalion Effect (Kazunori, 1996, p.52). This is significant in a society where teachers wield significant authority in the classroom compared to their western counterparts. Japanese is a society where school, until 2002, followed a 6-day week. Student respect for teachers can, and should, be used to facilitate individual performance both in and out of academia and in and out of groups (whether it is a class group or a sports team/group) (Kazunori, 1996; Umezu, 1978). Consistent with other research, Kazunori (1996) also adds that the teacher's ability to make the task attractive significantly adds to group effectiveness in the classroom.

Not surprisingly, research on group effectiveness seems consistent on both sides of the Pacific. Research within Asia, however, does not focus specifically on social loafing. The ideas noted above are worthy, but why the virtual gap in social loafing research in Japan? Whatever the reasons for lack of involvement in the prevention of loafing, given the lack of research within Japanese academia, the instructor may simply need to refer to the detailed steps given in this research for help in preventing the loafing. This study showed that awareness of the problem is high. Now, teachers must follow through.

Instructor Perceptions on the Causes of Loafing

When instructors were asked why they think the problems of social loafing and/or free-riding occur, the reasons were as varied as they were interesting. They ranged from the common (such as laziness, time constraints, apathy and lack of motivation and interest) to group-based factors (student domination and dislike of group work, lack of a feeling of ownership with group goals, lack of group solidarity). Others included factors based on individuals (different skill levels, different abilities and different work attitudes) and, not surprisingly, the subject of this paper (avoid personal responsibility and free-riding, "some people have no problem letting others do the work for them."). Perhaps the most eye-opening response was "I think the top-down authoritative nature of modern education is the cause. Students expect education to be brought to them." Finally, only one teacher commented that culture may be a factor. Given that previous research indicates that culture is a prime factor in determining a person's level of motivation, why isn't there a greater awareness on the part of the instructors? In the case of Japan, it is a homogenous society, with less than 2% of the population being non-Japanese, so this is understandable. In the multi-ethnic case of the U.S., however, culture may need to be more recognized as a factor in social loafing. It should be noted here that the vast majority of the qualitative responses came from teachers in the U.S. (more than 75%), making a cultural difference regarding the instructor's perceived reasons for loafing or free-riding difficult to differentiate.

What can instructors do?

The results of this study, although limited, offer insight into a pervasive problem. Given that teachers are aware of the problem, why don't they show a higher awareness of the options available for curbing social loafing? The responses given by teachers in this study confirm ideas from previous research, as well as offer a few new ones (the reader is again referred to Appendix C). As explained in detail earlier, past research offers preventative measures for loafing that include, but are not limited to:

a) providing individuals with incentives;
b) making each member's work indispensable;
c) making the cost of participation minimal;
d) giving learning-oriented feedback (as opposed to performance-oriented feedback) to individuals and to the group as a whole;
e) making the group's goals intrinsically valuable and relevant to each member of the group;
f) having all members give feedback and evaluation to all other members in the group;
g) making all individual contributions identifiable;
h) making all individual contributions measurable by some objective, stable, meter; and
i) having people with high-efficacy expectations in the group.

With many of these suggestions related to assessment and feedback, one more could be added: instructors could try engaging students in the assessment process by collaborating with them on standards for grading before the projects begin.

Based on research in motivation and the idea that in effective groups "intrinsic motivation can emerge ... people can be authentic and spontaneous and can accept full responsibility for their actions" (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p.62.), instructors should take steps to ensure a more respectful, open atmosphere which will carry over into academic group activities. Ideas to achieve this include:

a) creating an inclusive environment to set the stage for students to become part of a learning community.
b) providing stimulating, interactive and various activities (allowing the instructor to encourage social facilitation among the members of the group).
c) avoiding uninteresting, irrelevant activities to avoid promoting social loafing and subsequent isolation of any student in the classroom.

Offering specific steps to accomplish increased motivation and inclusion in the group, LaMonica (2001) suggests that instructors:

a) maintain an open mind and a willingness to accept new ideas. By doing so, an educator models that quality for students and facilitate inclusion.
b) guide students in developing a positive attitude. Social loafing literature shows that people need to believe that there is relevance in what they are doing in the group. By setting clear goals and objectives (and using techniques such as learning contracts) students develop positive self-concepts and attitudes toward the learning process, the classroom experience in general, and the group work in particular.
c) enhance meaning. Challenge learners to think and participate in the learning experience. By encouraging students to share their own opinions, their values, judgments, opinions and viewpoints in the group activities, the instructor helps learners to put themselves "out there.". In this way, learners discover within themselves reasons to pursue learning, the essence of intrinsic motivation.
d) stimulate competence. Students must feel that they have met with some success in their efforts. By providing varied and specific feedback, the instructor can lead students toward a positive self-evaluation of their own learning.

In situations where the loafing has already arisen (i.e. preventative measures were either not taken, or were ineffective), research that focused on the classroom group by Buckenmyer (2002) offers some detailed steps for what he calls progressive discipline, in order to curb it. He advises the instructor to
do the following:

a) Have a heart-to-heart talk with the loafer and attempt to resolve the issue internally.
b) Establish a written code of behavior and/or agreed upon conditions for continued involvement of the loafing member in the group.
c) If the heart-to-heart talk and conditions mentioned above do not resolve the issue, the instructor should talk to the loafer directly in order to alleviate the problem.
d) It may also be advisable to do peer evaluations both midway through the group project as well as at the end (as one instructor suggested in this study).

The main idea is that a group will at least attempt to resolve any issue within the group itself, before the instructor (or other facilitator or "outsider" has to be brought in). Since there is frequent conflict in real-world groups (outside the classroom), students must try constructively to solve conflict from within. Lastly, if the issues or behavior become too intrusive on the groups ability to function, or if personality conflicts prevent some type of resolution of the (loafing) problem, it may be necessary for the instructor to split up the team. It is the goal of this research on the prevention or curbing of social loafing which mandates that splitting up any group should be the last option, depending on the measures taken.

Summary and Future Research

This paper strived to add to the growing body of research on the problem of social loafing in academic groups. It should be considered an extensive of previous work done by the same authors between the cultures of Japan and the U.S. and will, hopefully, stimulate other researchers to do more of the same. It showed that the problem of loafing crosses national borders and it offered support for the notion that instructors, although aware that both social loafing and free-riding exist, do not take enough measures to prevent the problem. Clearly, this has implications for educational policy. One in-course policy would seem to be the establishment of a fair and equitable set of course assignments. Where group projects are assigned, individual contributions should be made equal, indispensable, and clearly identifiable at a minimum. Loafing or free-riding students should not receive the same grade as those students completing their work at expected (or higher) performance levels. Consistent with this approach is the balancing of individual and group-level components to any "group" assignment, so that monitoring can occur. In all, the assignment of group projects should not elicit groans of anticipation, nor should they be sources of frustration.

Future research could go in many directions including more research across different cultures. Is loafing prevalent and is awareness of the problem high in other Asian countries? On a more local scale, studies on the problem of social loafing in different academic majors could be undertaken. Do instructors of liberal arts classes have different experiences than instructors of business classes or science classes? Studies could also be done on undergraduates versus graduate courses. Graduate courses tend to be much smaller than undergraduate ones, so there may be a stronger inclination on the part of instructors to actively prevent social loafing in those cases. Wherever this research takes us, it must not end. Instructors who are aware of the problem, but take no measures to curb or prevent it need to seriously take a look at themselves in the mirror. What does it say about them and their role as educators?
References

Baron, R. (1986). Kansas State University Department of Psychology.
URL: http://www.ksu.edu/psych/bartel/social/ch10.html
URL: http://cst.semo.edu/cstl/resources/Contributions/index.asp
Caruso, M.J. (2002). Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Toledo, Ohio, U.S.A.
URL: http://homepages.utoledo.edu/mcaruso/
Colleges turn to prep school teachers for deficient students. (November 9, 1999). The Japan Times, p.3.


LaMonica, L. (2001). The Relationship Between Culture and Learner Motivation and Implications for Training. URL: http://www.geocities.com/lamonica/culture.html


URL: http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/1650/htmlbto02.html


Damon E. Chapman (言語文化学科英語文化専攻)
Daniel Cochece Davis (Marist College)
(2002. 10. 31 受理)
Appendix A: Survey (Japanese)

先生方へ
今回のこのアンケート調査にご協力下さいますと大変ありがとうございます。厚く御礼申し上げます。
この調査は、ニューヨークにありますマリストカレッジのコミュニケーション学科、ダニエル・デザ
ウィス助教授と、広島市、比治山大学英文学科講師、デイモン・チャップマンとによって行われ
て頂いておりますが、主たる目的は、大学生のグループ活動に関する先生方のご経験につきまして、
情報を集めさせて頂くことです。
尚、この調査にご協力頂けますか否かは、全くご自由です。ただ、もしよろしければご協力頂きたく、
また、お答えになりにくい質問がございましたら、とばして頂いても結構です。
加えてこの調査結果は学内論文集に掲載させて頂きますので、全面的なご協力が頂けましたら、何よ
り資料として完璧なものになります上、無記名でお答えいただきます故に、一つでも多くお答え頂け
ますとより偏らない結果が期待できますので、大変ありがたいと思います。ご協力をお願いしております。
返信の際は同封された封筒にこのアンケート用紙を入れ、月日までにデイモン・チャップ
マン先生宛に返信してください。みなさんの御協力大変感謝いたします。

1）あなたの性別（〇をつけて下さい。）：  男性  女性

2）年齢：______才

3）職位：  助手 講師 助教授 教授

4）学科名：（例：コミュニケーション学科）

5）学生をグレード別のグループ活動に参加させられるのはどのくらいの頻度ですか。一つだけ〇で
囲んでください。

しない  まれに  時々  かなりの頻度で  常に

※上記の質問に「しない」と解答して下さった方は15)、16）にお進み下さい。

6）課題が終了した後、一つのグループ全体にグループとしての評価を与えられますか。それとも
グループ内の個々のメンバーに各々異なる評価を与えられますか。

グループ別  個人別

7）あなたのクラスでは、学生のグループ課題に対する参加度はいかがですか。一つだけ〇をつけて
下さい。

しない  殆どしない  要求された時・程々  要求以上に  全てに（100％）

8）あなたの学生グループの中で、他の学生と比べて課題への参加度が極端に低い学生がいますか。
そのような学生が存在する比率はどのくらいですか。

ない  殆どない  時々  しばしば  常に
9）上記の学生の参加度はどのくらいですか。

なし	殆どしない	要求された時	程々	要求以上に	全てに

10）グループ課題遂行に当たって、学生達の他の学生への依存度はどのくらいですか。

なし	殆どしない	時々	しばしば	常に

11）あなたの学生の中で、グループ課題に協力しない学生がいる、と言いつけに来る学生がいますか。

いない	めったにない	時々	しばしば	常に

12）上記のような事態を防ぐための努力は、どのくらいの頻度でされますか。

なし	殆どしない	時々	しばしば	常に

＊‘しない’以外の解答に○をつけて下げた先生、前記のような事態の発生を防ぐために何をなさいますか。（簡単に記述して下さい。）

13）そのような事態が起きたときに、あなたのグループの学生はどのように対応しましたか。（簡単に記述して下さい。）

14）どうしてこのような現象が起きるとお考えですか。

15）Social Loafing（風呂敷：定職もなくぷらぷら暮らしている人）という言業を聞いたことがあるですか。

あります	ありません

16）Free Riding（ただ乗り、便乗 例：貢献しないで成果の分け前だけあずかるようなこと）という言業を聞いたことがありますか。

あります	ありません

以上です。有り難うございました。
Appendix B: Survey (English)

Thank you for participating in this research study. The study is being supervised by Damon E. Chapman, Associate Professor at Hijiyama University (Hiroshima, Japan), and Daniel Cochece Davis, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at Marist College (Poughkeepsie, New York, U.S.A.). The purpose of this survey is to collect information on teachers' experience with college student groups. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to skip over any question you feel unable/unwilling to answer or disclose. The results of this study will appear in a scholarly publication. However, all participants' responses will be kept anonymous. Thus, your complete candidness and participation are appreciated and valued.

1. Your Sex (circle one): Male Female

2. Age (in years): ____________

3. Rank in School (circle one):
   Graduate Student/Instructor    Instructor    Assistant Professor
   Associate Professor    Professor

4. Department (e.g., English, Communication, etc.): ____________________________

5. How often do you have students participate in a graded group project with other students? (circle one)
   Never    Rarely / Seldom    Sometimes    Often    Always

If 'never,' please go to questions 15-16.

6. Do you typically give the group projects a single group grade, or is each group member graded individually? (circle one)
   Group Grade    Individual Grade

7. How much do students usually contribute to the student group projects in your classes? (circle one)
   Nothing    Barely Anything    Required/Moderate Amount
   More Than Required    Everything (100%)

8. How often does one of your student groups contain a member contributing dramatically less to the group project than what the other students contributed? (circle one)
   Never    Rarely / Seldom    Sometimes    Often    Always

9. How much did that individual contribute to the student group project? (circle one)
   Nothing    Barely Anything    Required/Moderate Amount
   More Than Required    Everything (100%)
10. How often do students rely on other students to do their work for them in group projects? (circle one)

Never  Rarely / Seldom  Sometimes  Often  Always

11. How often do your students tell you about a situation where one group member is not contributing an acceptable amount of effort toward the group project? (circle one)

Never  Rarely / Seldom  Sometimes  Often  Always

12. How often do you try to prevent this type of situation from occurring? (circle one)

Never  Rarely / Seldom  Sometimes  Often  Always

If your answer is something other than "never," how do you try to prevent this type of situation? (Please explain briefly)

13. What did your students in the group do about the situation? (Please explain briefly)

14. Why do you think this phenomenon occurs?

15. Have you ever heard of the concept of Social Loafing?  Yes  No

16. Have you ever heard of the concept of Free Riding?  Yes  No
Appendix C: Teacher Responses

This appendix lists the qualitative responses instructors gave to the survey question (#12) "How often do you try to prevent this type of situation [social loafing] from occurring?" It must be noted that most of these replies (77%) came from U.S. instructors, which, unfortunately, this does not give much insight into the minds of the Japanese teaching staff. (Note: “Categories” below were organized by the authors.)

Grading / Evaluation
- Meet with group, meet with individual, account for group and individual grades. Use group feedback sheets.
- Internal grading of each member, grades all others in the group.
- [Give an] individual component to grade, weekly reports on activities, peer evaluations at midterm and end, talk with students.
- Each group member grades the contributions each other has made. This is used to weight the group grade for each individual.
- I tell the students in advance that their group mates will “grade” and evaluate their efforts at the end of the course. Each student evaluates his/her group mate on a form that I provide.
- The rating system is intended to minimize the problem. I talk to the students about how to manage the situation. Groups do peer feedback.
- I tell students that the group grade policy can be changed for any group with a free rider.
- * Students are always asked to write a “Metatext” about the group experience.

Measure Student's Individual Input
- Students submit work sheet describing each student’s primary responsibility and contribution. Students contributing nothing are not listed and must submit another project.
- I have a sheet the group agrees to fill out stating, in percentages, how much work each of the members did for the total project.

Give Encouragement & Raise Interest
- I give them “interest” (in the assignment).
- I encourage students to be in a group by making smaller groups.

Teacher Prevention / Intervention
- Meet with group to discuss how to work as a group before they get too far along on their project.
- Mediation - We have a group meeting or I convey the problem to the student who is not contributing.
- [I have a] personal conversation with each member of the team.
- Discuss the importance of group work, and tell students that their non-participation could result in removal from the group. Also, I let them know that they can come tell me if they are having group problems.
- Give constant attention.