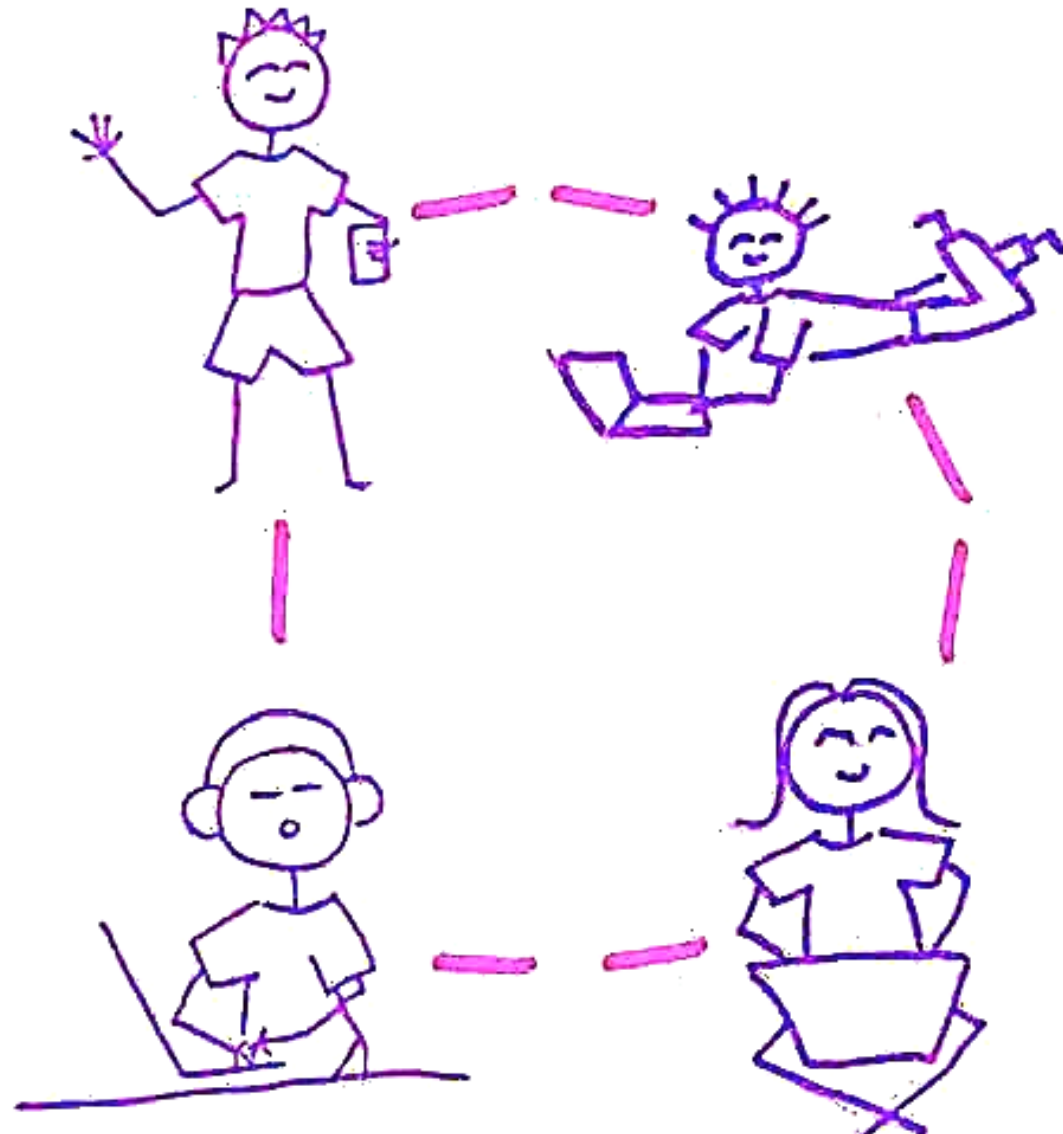# Virtual teamwork for student assessment

Mission impossible?

Associate Professor Celeste Lawson

Presentation for ACODE 83

16 March 2021

About me

- Who am I to be talking about teamwork assessment?
- Teaching into Higher Ed since 2001
- Have been coordinating distance students since 2011
- National Citation relating to teamwork assessment

A short word
on the year
that was 2020

Foundations for good practice:
The student experience of online
learning in Australian higher
education during the COVID-19
pandemic

November 2020

TEQSA

What worked well

- Effort to transition to online was acknowledged

- Generally, the effort was appreciated by students

- Students liked
  - Flexibility – of time AND assessments
  - Use of technology
  - Access to help

- Many still prefer face-to-face

Australian Government
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Foundations for good practice: The student experience of online learning in Australian higher education during the COVID–19 pandemic

November 2020

TEQSA

Issues identified by TEQSA

- Reduced interaction with academic staff and peers

- Difficulties with IT and variation in staff expertise in its use

- Assessment changes

- Isolation, lack of engagement and reduced motivation

- Difficulty with the translation of some subject areas from an internal to an online mode of delivery.

Australian Government
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Foundations for good practice: The student experience of online learning in Australian higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic

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TEQSA

Online is not new

- TEQSA has been producing guidance notes for years

- Most Universities already had online Learning Management Systems and Zoom (or equivalent) access

- Most universities did NOT have collaborative tools for online communication – beyond Zoom and Teams

- Discipline challenges acknowledged

Australian Government
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Foundations for good practice: The student experience of online learning in Australian higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic

November 2020
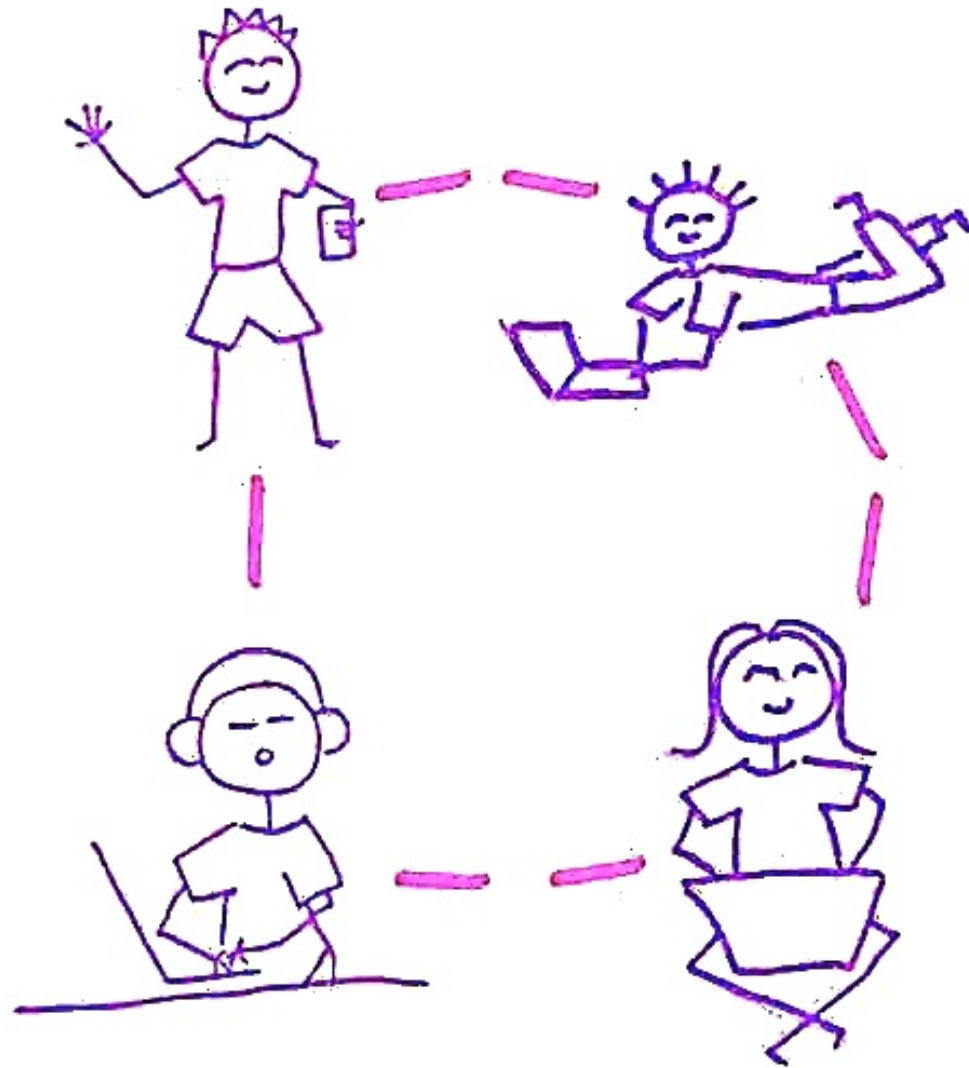
TEQSA

A little background - CQU

- Higher education institutions face pressure of work ready graduates, attrition/retention, student satisfaction

- The context of CQU
  - We are multi-campus with about 50% online students
  - We are not exempt from the problem of attrition
  - We aspire to be innovative

A little background – the world

- It is what workplaces look like
  - Teamwork attributed to 80% of corporate workplace output.[1]
  - 40% of workers are operating in a virtual environment (and rising).[2]

- The question is not why higher education needs to engage online students in teamwork, but how can we can prepare work ready graduates WITHOUT engaging online students in teamwork!
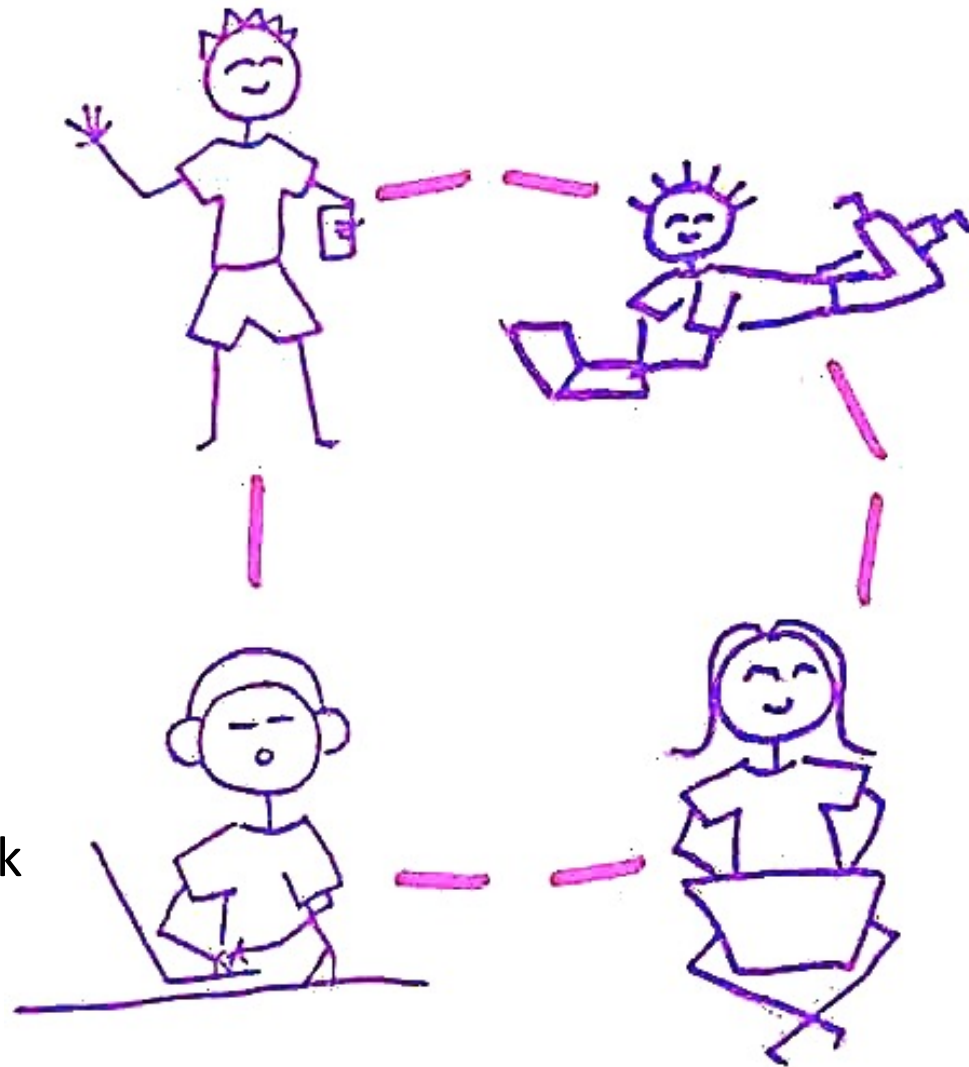
What is virtual teamwork?

- Student engagement?
- Class participation??

What is virtual teamwork **assessment**?

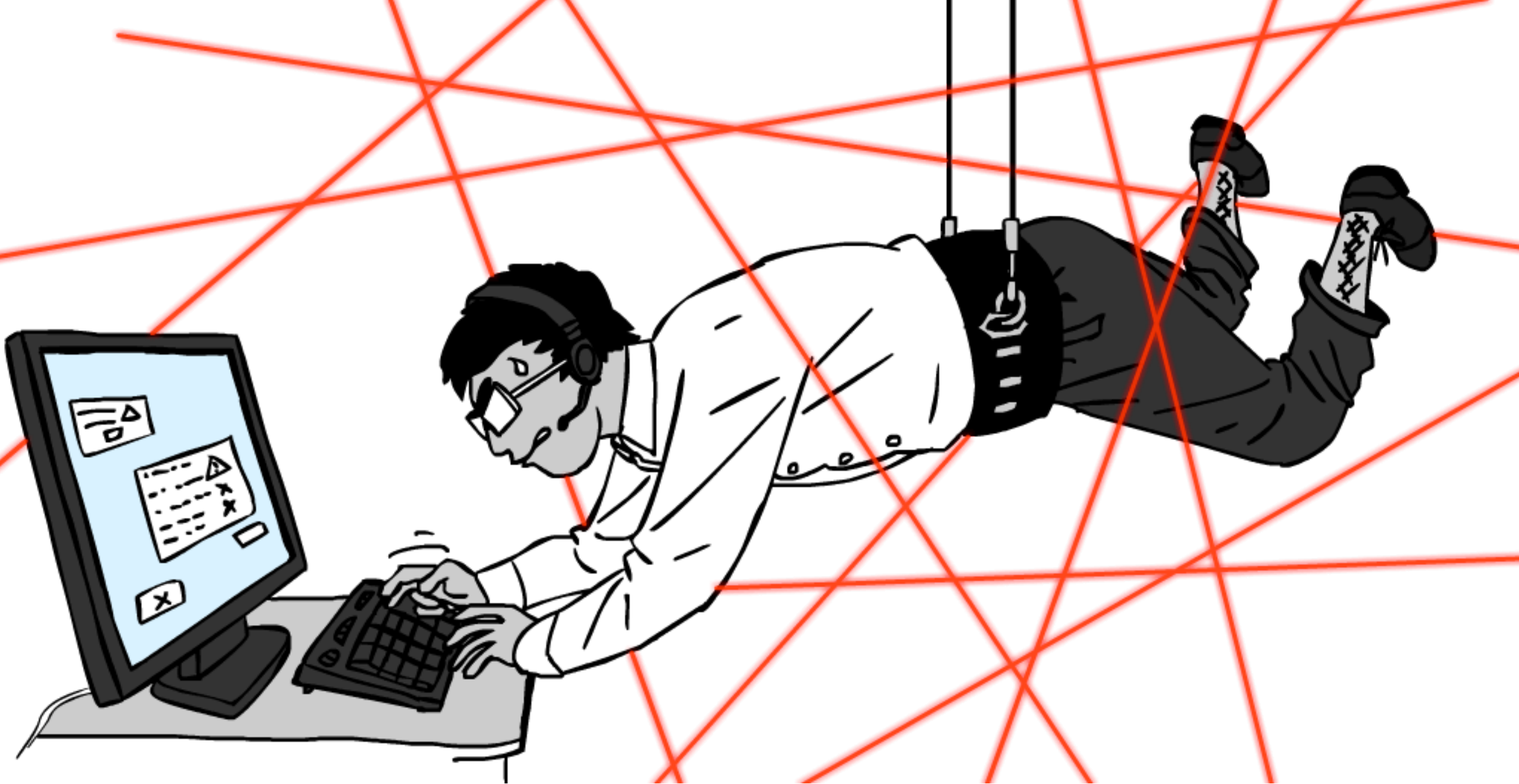Getting a GRADE for the 'doing' of teamwork

Undertaken online

Image source: mission clipart mission impossible 1663540 https://webstockreview.net

Anecdotal academic attitudes

- The argument against virtual teamwork assessment
  - Students hate it
  - It's difficult to manage
  - Students don't engage
  - It leads to low student satisfaction and high attrition
  - It's irrelevant to the discipline
  - Did I mention students hate it?
- On the flip side – it can be easy to mark!
  - One report, a group of six students.
  - Woo hoo! Marking divided by six!
  - (We need to ignore pedagogy to embrace this one.)

It's unfair!!

- Social loafers and free-riders

I do all the work and others who do nothing get the same grade.

She just sat there and didn't even turn her camera on.

I enrolled late and the teams were formed. There was nothing for me to do.

No one contacted me.

It's unfair!!

- Social loafers and free-riders
- High achievers

I had to fix up everything the others submitted.

Can I just do the assessment on my own? I hate working with others.

Someone edited my stuff without my permission! It was good until then.

It's unfair!!

- Social loafers and free-riders
- High achievers
- Team communication (and conflict)

I wasn't told that the task I had been asked to do was no longer needed/was done by someone else.

I offered to help but no one asked me to do anything.

I couldn't get hold of one team member so I had to do their work.

I wasn't given the chance to talk.

I had a good idea but it was just shot down.

It's unfair!!

- Social loafers and free-riders
- High achievers
- Team communication (and conflict)
- Perceptions of geographical, professional or social isolation

I can't make it to meetings because I work/have family commitments.

Meetings are always on campus.

I try to participate but the others in the team are in other classes together and I feel like I'm missing out.

They all knew each other and I didn't know anyone.

I work in the industry and this is NOT what happens. It's completely unrealistic.

It's unfair!!

- Social loafers and free-riders
- High achievers
- Team communication (and conflict)
- Perceptions of geographical, professional or social isolation
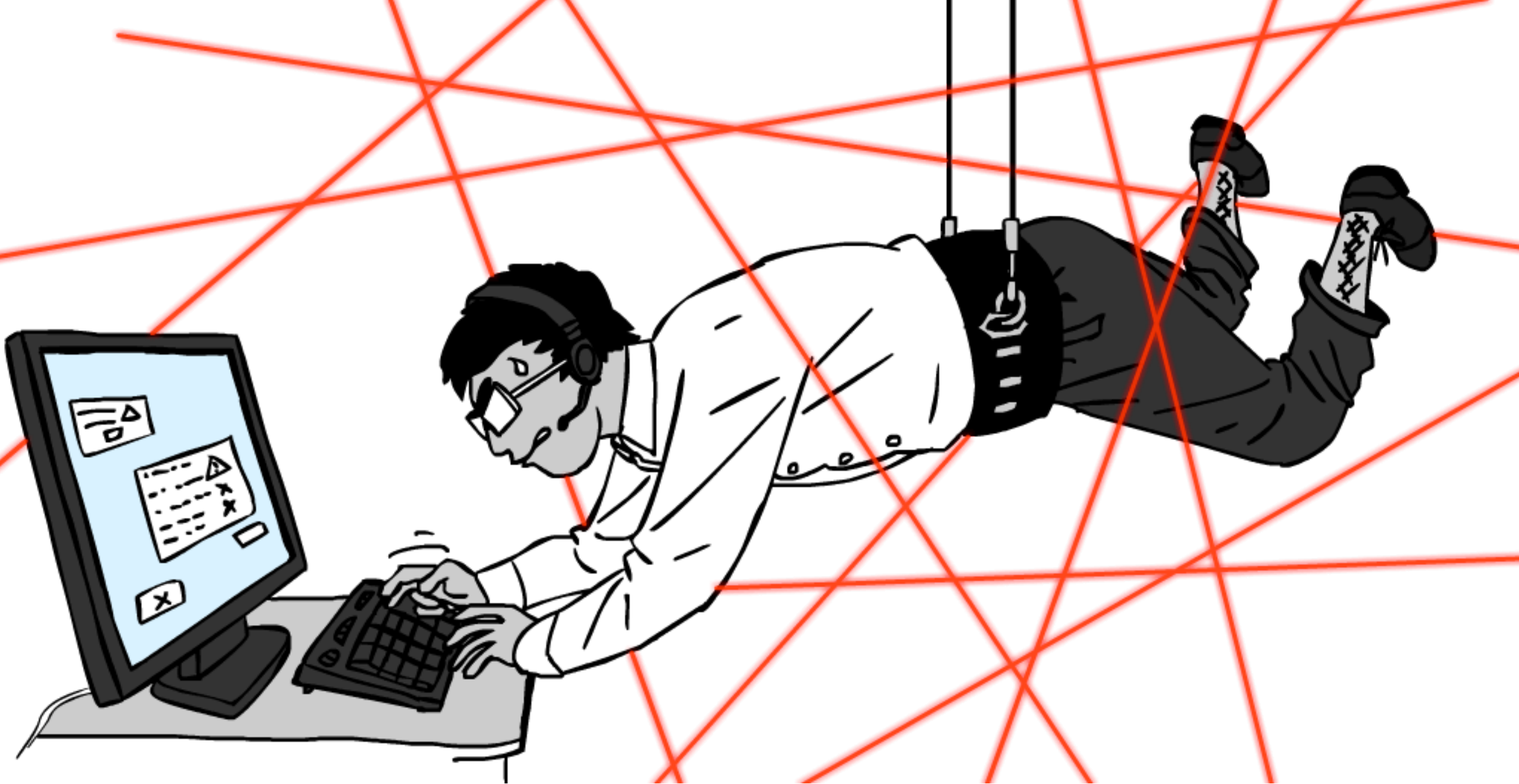
What do we want?

Image source: mission clipart mission impossible 1663540 https://webstockreview.net

What do we want?

- Work ready graduates
- Engaged students
- Fair recognition of effort
- Retention

AUTHENTICITY

TEAM SELECTION

GRADING

SCAFFOLDING

AUTHENTICITY

TEAM SELECTION

GRADING

SCAFFOLDING

Assess the PROCESS, not the task!

- Ah! But how???
- Either it's individual, or it's not. Right?
- How can an individual contribution in a teamwork task be graded?

Stay with us –

- We'll revisit this doozy this afternoon with a case study