

CASE STUDY 3

At first the semester seemed to be going well with all of the groups in Professor Stanley Milkovics' biology course, at least as far as he could tell. In his course, students work in groups in the lecture class, and for a number of the laboratory exercises.

About two-thirds of the way through the semester, however, seemingly out of the blue, all three of the male members of one of the groups approached Prof. Milkovics to complain about the fourth member, a woman named Stacey. They told him that they had discussed Stacey's contribution to both the PBL sessions and the laboratory exercises amongst themselves, and had decided to leave Stacey a note informing her that they were taking all her group points away from her PBL grade (all group members had given themselves this prerogative in the "consequences" statement of their group ground rules). When asked by Professor Milkovics, they admitted that they had never said anything about their discontent to Stacey prior to sending her the note.

Overnight

Stacey was waiting outside Dr. Milkovics' office door bright and early the next day. She immediately began to complain about how unfairly she had been treated by her group members. She claimed that they had never warned her that they were unhappy with her, and that she had reasonable explanations that excused her tardiness to group meetings, having to leave lab in the middle of exercises, not participating in out-of-class group meetings, and so on. She felt that she should not lose these points, even though she had signed the ground rules statement. She threatened to go to the department chair or higher if this were to happen to her.