Why are some groups smarter than others?
Exploring the role of collective intelligence in small group performance.

**Background:** Traditional notions of ‘intelligence’ are predicated on individual mental abilities that predict performance in many academic, occupational, and personal settings. Until recently, few had asked whether groups exhibit their own form of intelligence, or ‘collective intelligence.’ We report on a quasi-experimental, correlational study that seeks to explore this issue. Our findings suggest that groups exhibit a form of collective intelligence that is analogous, but largely unrelated, to the intelligence of individual group members. Instead we find factors such as group size, personality (conscientiousness, openness), common language (e.g., English), conversational sharing, and social sensitivity making significant contributions to what it takes to become a ‘smart group.’

**Question:** Does collective intelligence exist?

**Participants:**
- 85 adults allocated to 29 groups
  - 96% students, 71% female, 93% OS born
  - Quasi-experimental, correlational
  - Classroom Laboratory
  - University of Melbourne, Australia

**Procedure:**
- Individual IQ Test
- Group IQ Test

**Results:**
Yes, collective intelligence does exist!

**Implication 1: What may help groups become smarter?**
- Communication
  - Conversational turn-taking, sharing leadership and distributing dominance all help, as does sharing skills at a common language (e.g., English)
- Personality
  - Openness and Conscientiousness help; extraversion & agreeableness do not.
- Social Sensitivity & Theory of Mind
  - Accurately reading and responding to others’ emotional states

**Implication 2: What may not help groups become smarter?**
- Emotion Intelligence
  - No significant link

**Conclusions:**

Many potential causes, many possible ‘levers’ to improve group IQ

Many limitations & much to be learned:
- Can we change it?
- Can we teach it?
- What does it predict?
- E.g., group assignments, team-projects, CoP performance?

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**References:**