

WORKING IN GROUPS

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

More and more work is being done in groups. Teamwork is now considered one of the most important employability skills. College courses use groups more often because they believe that this reflects the “real world” of work. We know that people learn better when they are actively involved and groups promote involvement and participation. We know that we learn best from each other and groups are a good place for such learning to take place.

GENERAL RULES FOR GROUP WORK

- Be polite – If you disagree, do so with respect for others.
- Cooperate – Be apart of the team. Groups do not need spectators or dictators- they need team players.
- Make a good first impression – Find things that everyone has in common as a basis for getting to know each other.
- Let everyone talk – this means that everyone must learn how to listen.
- Praise each other – Recognition and encouragement are powerful ways to make the results of a group effort extraordinary.
- Check your egos at the door – Everyone in the group is equally important.
- Be honest – If there is a problem, get it out in the open as politely and as quickly as you can. Groups usually work on short time lines and problems have to be solved very quickly or they will interfere with success.
- Use your instructor – When there is a disagreement that cannot be resolved, a lack of effort from one or more group members or confusion about activities and goals that cannot be resolved- talk to your instructor.



ORGANIZE THE GROUP

- Define and agree on exactly what has to be accomplished. Be clear, complete and certain about what the results may look like.
- Define all of the different activities that are required to accomplish the task. If you need to prioritize them and put them in sequence, do it right away.

ROLE IDENTIFICATION

- Determine the skills that each person brings to the group.
- Establish the roles that fit with each persons strengths.

Some roles include:

- Moderator-leads and coordinates discussions
- Recorder-takes notes of decisions, discussions and information shared
- Encourager-keeps everyone involved and promotes participation
- Focuser – keeps the group on track

DEFINE GROUP EXPECTATIONS

Begin by deciding:

- How information is to be shared.
- How communication is maintained.
- How work will be distributed among group members (It is important to know who will do what, how, to what standard and by what date).
- How often and where the group will meet.
- Expectations of attendance for group meetings.
- Disagreements-decide how the group will handle disagreements.
- Set dates-establish dates for each activity to be completed.
- Keep your instructor informed-decide how often to bring the instructor up to date on the group's progress.

EVALUATE

- Evaluate progress each time you meet and compare progress to the date(s) when activities are to be completed.

REWARD

- When all is done, reward your group for a job well done!