Section B: Working in a Group
Working in a Group

Building an effective group

As a member of an effective group, you should

- understand and agree with the common goals of the group
- understand that success of the group is shared among group members
- be willing to share responsibilities and contribute to the group work
- be willing to help each other

How would an effective group be built?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things to do</th>
<th>Tips</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Form a group</td>
<td>If allowed, make up a group of 3 or 5</td>
<td>✓ Relatively easy to get everybody's involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group of 4 is not good</td>
<td>✓ Likely to subdivide into 2 pairs leading to formation of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>subgroups that may tear the group into parts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 5 is disastrous</td>
<td>✓ Difficult to get group agreement with large group size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group with someone that you have never</td>
<td>Enable you to:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>worked before</td>
<td>- Develop relationship with other classmates</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Expose yourself with more diverse viewpoints, especially in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Voice out opinions with no fear of hurting the feeling of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>buddies in a group</td>
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</table>
## Working in a Group

### 1 Building an effective group

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| 2. Setting ground rules | It is important that the group members agreed on the following:  
  - **What** ground rules are necessary?  
  - **Why** ground rules are important?  
  - **When** ground rules are applied?  
  - **How** ground rules are carried out? | ✓ Help group members to understand how they should behave in order that the group could work best  
  - Examples:  
    - Be on time in each meeting  
    - All members share in team work  
    - Offer suggestions rather than criticisms |
| 3. Defining responsibilities | Assignment of responsibilities should be based on skills and expertise of members |  
  - Examples:  
    - The leader has to make sure that ground rules are enforced  
    - The recorder has to record ideas in discussions |
| 4. Managing process | You will find it very helpful to review the group process regularly, e.g. every two week or every month  
  - All group members should participate in the review | ✓ Help the group to find out problems together before it is too late  
  - Examples:  
    - How well is each group member doing his/her role?  
    - How well is the interpersonal relationship?  
    - How well is the group working together as a whole? |
Think of the **importance of effective communication**. It can help you to:

- understand each other’s needs
- maintain good relationships
- share opinions and expertise
- minimize interpersonal conflicts
- keep everything going in the right direction

How well are you doing in communicating with others?  

(a) Feel free to speak up your ideas or feelings.  
(b) Present your ideas in a simple and organized way.  
(c) Use words which people can easily understand.  
(d) Check the feedback from your audience to make sure that they understand you (e.g. asking questions, observing body language).  
(e) Know your audience well (e.g. interests, backgrounds, personalities).  
(f) Listen to others’ opinions without prejudice or negative feelings.  
(g) Try to understand other people’s situation.  
(h) Focus on issues and try your best to avoid personal attacks.

**My scores are low for these statements: __________________________. I need to IMPROVE!!!**
When making a decision for a group project, it is VERY IMPORTANT to involve everybody. It can enable you to:

- fully utilize the expertise and wisdom in the group
- arrive at a better solution
- get support from the group members

How well is your group doing in making group decisions?

(a) Encourage group members to suggest as many solutions as possible.
(b) Make sure that everyone understands alternative solutions.
(c) Allow members to point out the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative solution.
(d) Avoid taking a majority vote without having considered all the alternatives in detail.
(e) Avoid making a quick decision because of time constraints.
(f) Avoid having dominant speakers or "smart guys" make decisions at all times.
(g) Involve all members in the decision-making process.
(h) Ensure that the final decision satisfies everyone.

Our scores are low for these statements: _________________________. We need to IMPROVE!!!
Conflict and disagreement should not be ignored in a group. It has to be resolved properly. Otherwise, it can:

- affect the group’s progress
- ruin the relationships among members
- create barriers to good solutions and creative ideas

How well is your group doing in handling disagreements?

(a) Try to find out the causes of the conflict: e.g. clashes between personal and team goals, work procedures, interpersonal relationships.
(b) Consider each other’s viewpoints.
(c) Voice your feelings and viewpoints towards the issue.
(d) Be careful what you say and how you react in relation to the disagreement.
(e) Make use of humor to ease tension.
(f) Look for alternative ways of doing the project that can avoid the disagreement.
(g) Make sure that everybody is satisfied with the final solution.
(h) Repair the damage the disagreement made on group relationships and the project.

Our scores are low for these statements: __________________________. We need to IMPROVE!!!
In your project group, each member has his/her expertise and should be allowed to take the lead when there is a problem that needs his/her specialties. Therefore, leadership should be shared by members. Shared leadership enables the group to:

- develop the leadership skills of members
- have somebody who has the appropriate expertise to guide difficult decisions
- enhance members’ sense of responsibilities and accomplishments

How well are you doing as a leader in a project group?

(a) Not afraid of being a leader.

(b) Willing to take up the responsibilities of a leader in the area where you are more knowledgeable.

(c) Determined to act as a good leader for the assigned task.

(d) Able to see the direction and to point it out to group members.

(e) Able to stimulatе others to think and contribute ideas in a meeting.

(f) Willing to listen to members instead of speaking yourself for most of the time.

(g) Able to consider the feelings of members during group discussions.

(h) Able to summarize the points to guide the group to make a decision at the appropriate time.

My scores are low for these statements: _______________________. I need to IMPROVE!!!
# Basic elements of effective group work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5Rs</th>
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</table>
| **Responsibility** | Contribute as much as you can  
Complete the work assigned to you |
| **Reliance** | Help each other to:  
- Learn from the project  
- Complete the project |
| **Relationship** | Encourage each other to  
- Share information  
- Exchange viewpoints  
- Discuss learning strategies  
- Form good partnerships  
Show acceptance to different personalities |
| **Respect** | Be sensitive to each other’s  
- Needs  
- Feelings  
- Positions  
Be devoted to the project |
| **Reflection** | Be aware of:  
- How much progress the group has made  
- How much you have contributed to the group  
- How well you have communicated with the members  
- How well the project has been done |
## Working in a Group

**Self-evaluation: How well have we done?**

### Working as a Group

Be honest to yourself and circle the number that best reflects how well you have done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Working as a Group</th>
<th>Lowest</th>
<th>Highest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>We tried to include members with different expertise in the group instead of getting together with friends.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ground rules were discussed and agreed by all members.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Group members tried to maintain good group culture by applying the ground rules.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>We tried hard to clarify the goals of our group for doing the project.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Responsibilities allocated to members were fair in terms of workload.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Our group fully utilized the members’ differences, strengths, and competence.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Communication among group members was open and non-defensive.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Group members respected different opinions and tried hard to handle disagreements reasonably.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Decision making was based on the common interest of our group.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Task leaders and members were able to fulfill their roles and work together productively.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Our group reviewed how well we were working as a team from time to time.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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### Working as a Member in the Group

<table>
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<th>Lowest</th>
<th>Highest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I always felt myself to be part of the group.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I fully understood the project goals and was committed to achieving them.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I was clear about what I was expected to do in the group.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I was cooperative in following the ground rules.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I was able to communicate my ideas clearly to other group members.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I felt I was accepted by the group members.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I could accept others’ opinions and personalities.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I respected the group decisions and tried my best to carry them out.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I was able to take up the responsibility as a leader in my own area of responsibility.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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</table>