Group work combines goal setting, scheduling (time management), effective communication, leadership, collaboration, and conflict management, while enabling students to work on projects that are larger and more complex than reasonable for individual work. Working effectively as part of a group (or team) is an essential skill for both the workplace and university.

Communication Skills

To function successfully in a small group, students need to be able to communicate clearly on intellectual and emotional levels. Effective communicators:

- can explain their own ideas,
- express their feelings in an open but non-threatening way,
- listen carefully to others,
- ask questions to clarify others' ideas and emoreflect on the activities and interactions of their group and encourag do so as well.

Regular open communication, in which group members share their thoughts, ideas, and feelings, is a must for successful group work. Unspoken assumptions and issues can be very destructive to productive group functioning. When students are willing to communicate openly with one another, a healthy climate will emerge, and an effective process can be followed.

Healthy Group Climate

To work together successfully, group members must demonstrate a sense of cohesion. Cohesion emerges as group members exhibit the following skills:

- **Openness**: Group members are willing to get to know one another, particularly those with different interests and backgrounds. They are open to new ideas, diverse viewpoints, and the variety of individuals present within the group. They listen to others and elicit their ideas. They know how to balance the need for cohesion within a group with the need for individual expression.
  accountability for the tasks they have been assigned.

Have questions? Contact the Senior Manager of Student Learning Support & Disability Resources.
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Discussions & Decisions

Establishing a solid framework and making clear decisions as a group before you begin your project or assignment will help everyone to focus on the collaboration aspect of group work.

- Select a group identifier or project name to be used to identify your group/project. Appoint a group member to liaise with the professor/instructor.
- Develop a solid understanding of the project requirements and due date.
- Allocate roles for each person at meetings (e.g., facilitator, note taker, progress tracker, timekeeper, mediator, challenger, summarizer). Note that all roles interconnect. Assign the first week roles based on strengths and desired roles, and alternate roles in following weeks to give everyone a chance to develop these skills.
- Set up a schedule of weekly meetings (in person, online).
- Agree upon a method of online collaboration. Decide how group members will communicate, be it through email or an online document/project management system.
- Create a set of group norms (e.g., cell phones off during meetings, only one person talks at a time, listen to understand).
- Discuss how group challenges such as disagreements, lack of communication and lack of participation should be handled.
- Break the project down into smaller tasks, determining which tasks can be completed individually, as a group, online or need to have group meetings to facilitate.
- Allocate tasks to individuals based on current strengths and skills, and str9.5 (tn)2.2.3 (g)2.6 (t)73h a-1.3 (an2.2 (