



ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAMS



WORKING IN GROUPS



Working in groups promotes information retention, enhances critical thinking, and develops interpersonal skills by allowing students to collaborate and discuss their ideas with their peers. Students are able to benefit from each other's strengths, cover each other's weaknesses, and increase their learning by explaining recently acquired material to other students. Work on group projects promotes problem-solving skills as well as teamworking skills which are highly valued in the professional workforce.

WORKING IN GROUPS HAS BENEFITS

Be Successful

- Know your team
 - Exchange contact information and establish a communication process for group members
 - Ask about individual's strength and weaknesses
- Set objectives
 - What do you want to accomplish together?
 - Begin with an overall objective and divide into smaller goals
- Establish a timeline
 - Set a timeframe in which to complete each of your goals
 - Schedule meetings with consideration to each member's schedule
- Divide and conquer
 - Assign goals to specific individuals or smaller sub-groups based on each person's unique strengths
 - Assign roles to help facilitate group cohesion

Example Roles

- Leader
 - Guides discussion through open-ended questions, summarization, and clarification
 - Encourages group participation
- Organizer
 - Manages the group's schedule
 - Keeps a record of all meetings and their proceedings
- Researcher
 - Acquires and presents information to the group including resources
- Writer
 - Writes a majority of the project/report/presentation
- Editor
 - Ensures consistency of results by compiling work from other group members
- Presenter
 - Helps compile and create presentation and then presents in class

Avoid Pitfalls

- Groupthink
 - Occurs when members don't voice their own opinions
 - Offer alternative ideas and diverse options
- Handling Conflict
 - Conflicts can disrupt focus
 - Respect your group members
- Active Listening
 - Don't disregard other's contribution
 - Assess contributions fairly
- Difficulty Scheduling
 - Frustration can arise from those whose schedules aren't being considered
 - Consider using online resources like Skype, chats, email or Google Docs
- Different Expectations
 - Members may have different goals
 - Set clear, realistic goals during the early stages