

Group work considerations

Developed specifically for First Year Support Strategies site, based on <http://www.flinders.edu.au/teaching/quality/teaching-methods/group-work.cfm>

When organising group work for your students consider the following:

Setting norms

- What do you expect from your students?
- What can students expect from you?
- Is everyone required to participate?
- How will the students be provided with agency over their group work?
- How will in class work and out of class work be managed?

Relevance

- Why group work is relevant and important in this topic?
- Icebreakers (are these necessary)?

Experience

- Have the students worked in groups before?
- What experience of group work do they have?
- Have they been taught how to work in a group?
- Have you explained why they are required to work in groups?
- Are they ready to perform as a group?

Tasks

- What tasks will the group be required to perform?
- Is the size of the task appropriate to the size of the group?
- Do the tasks involve the development of specific skills - are there ample opportunities for each member of the group to acquire the skills

Roles

- What roles will they undertake?
- Will teams be prescribed roles?
- How will the roles be designated?

Timing (when will students start working in groups)

- Will the groups change (weekly, mid semester break)?
- How much in class time will be provided and how much work (time) will be required outside of class?

Skills and time allowed for group to develop

- Has time been set aside for group members to get to know each other within the group and for the group to develop an identity?
- Has the group been supported (provided with skills and time) to develop a clear structure and decision making process?
- Does the group have time to plan and consider strategies or approaches to the task, identify what to do and act on what they decide if things go wrong?
- Have the phases of group process – orientation (forming), conflict (storming), emergence (norming) and reinforcement (performing) – been discussed and time allowed for the groups to work through them?

How will groups be selected?

- Self selection
- Random
- Opinion
- Ability

OH&S

- Are there any specific OH&S issues related to working on-site in groups that students need to know?

Assessment

- How is the group activity going to be assessed?
- Are the assessment tasks appropriate for group work?
- How will “riders” be dealt with?
- How will you ensure fair weight for equal input?

For other ideas regarding group work visit: <http://www.flinders.edu.au/teaching/quality/teaching-methods/group-work.cfm>