

HOW DO I HELP STUDENTS LEARN (TO WORK) IN TEAMS?

PRINCIPLE	EXAMPLES
Intentionally Prepare Students for Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce the value of working in teams and provide opportunities for developing cohesion early in the semester• Before beginning a team-based assignment, prepare students for working in teams (e.g., Discuss differences between working alone and working in a team, explore common problems such as free riding and groupthink by discussing the importance of individual accountability, etc.).• Have students take Basadur's creative problem solving inventory profile and then discuss their results within their teams (e.g., What obstacles do they anticipate discovering in group assignments? What strengths do they each bring to the group?)
Purposefully Create Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Put students into teams that are diverse in order to maximize the availability of backgrounds, perspectives, talents, etc. that contribute to rich social interaction.• Do not let students choose their own team unless it is around specific topics or for special tasks.• Whenever possible, provide students with models of effective team structure.
Collaboratively Establish Team Structure and Functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prior to beginning work, ask students to complete a Team Contract that clearly lists the specific positive behaviors team members feel are important to their success (e.g., show up for meetings on time, come prepared to work, listen to each others' ideas, do your fair share of the work). It should also state how team members will handle the situation should their teammates not fulfill the agreement (e.g., talk to the team member, assign specific tasks to each other, make each teammate's contributions "matter" to the team's final product, hold each other accountable). By signing the contract, individuals agree to uphold the agreed-upon positive team norms and give their teammates the right to hold them to the norms too. See Example assignment/contract from UT Math course (Use a questionnaire to help students prepare for team assignments)• Provide students resources to support the group process (e.g., UNSW Australia offers checklists for groups' first and subsequent meetings to keep things running smoothly)• Help students understand the range and impact of various roles (See Task, Relational & Dysfunctional Roles)
Consistently Assess Team Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess both the product (e.g., the group deliverable) <i>and</i> the process (e.g., how the team worked together). Consider pros/cons of various methods for assessing group projects.• Use a rubric for grading communication and contribution skills (pull ideas from the AAC&U VALUE rubric for Teamwork).• Assessment about how well a team has worked together is probably best done by the team itself. Ask students to periodically evaluate their own or others' contributions to the group in relation to a set of process goals, such as respectfully listening to and considering opposing views or a minority opinion, effectively managing conflict around differences in ideas or approaches, keeping the group on track during and between meetings, promptness in meeting deadlines, etc. Then give groups a chance to generate strategies for improving their group processes. A professional communications course at MIT used forms to observe team communication and to assess their experience and the roles of other team members.