



COLLEGE MATTERS

Tips to help you succeed in your academic college career

Making Group Work - Work for You

It is inevitable. It is going to happen sometime and maybe many times during your college career. It might not make you happy, but you are going to have to do it. Yes, at least once you are going to be told by your professor that you have to do

A GROUP PROJECT!

Working with group members can be challenging, especially if you do not live on campus or have group members who work or who are engaged in sports or other activities. It will be easy to think that you can let someone else in the group do the work, but this doesn't help you make friends and doesn't help you learn.

Also, professors sometimes require group members to grade each other as part of the process. If you don't want to end up with an "F" from your group, follow these tips that can help group work work for you:

1. Get to know each other.

Take time during your first meeting to introduce yourselves. This is especially important if you have one member of the group who is new and doesn't know everyone else. Make that person feel included from the beginning. Exchange contact information and schedules. You are going to need to email or IM each other sometime during the group project!

2. Learn about the strengths of your group.

Is someone particularly good at writing? Is there someone in the group who feels comfortable talking in front of the class? Is someone in the group a great artist? Do you have a PowerPoint "expert" in your group? This information can help you divide up responsibilities.

3. Actively participate.

Don't expect your other group members to carry you along; this will just build up resentment and harm the group process. Do your part. If you have trouble making a meeting, let your group members know in advance. Don't let your teammates down.

4. Don't monopolize the group discussion.

Give everyone a chance to be heard. If someone hasn't contributed, ask that person what he or she thinks.

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5. Be respectful of each other.

Make sure that different viewpoints are acknowledged and discussed. Don't be afraid to disagree, but don't impose your opinions on everyone in the group. This is a *group* project; it is important that everyone in the group have a part in solving problems.

6. Set a clear timeline for completion of the group tasks and allow enough time.

Group projects can't easily be done at the last minute because you have to pull together everyone's contributions. Don't underestimate the extra time that group projects require.

7. Practice as a group.

If you are doing a group presentation, build in time for a "dress rehearsal" before class. This will help your presentation flow and identify gaps in the information you want to present.

8. Understand that group projects provide practice for the "real world."

Many jobs require that you work with team members to carry out an idea or to finish a project. Learning how to be a successful group member in college can help you later in life.

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