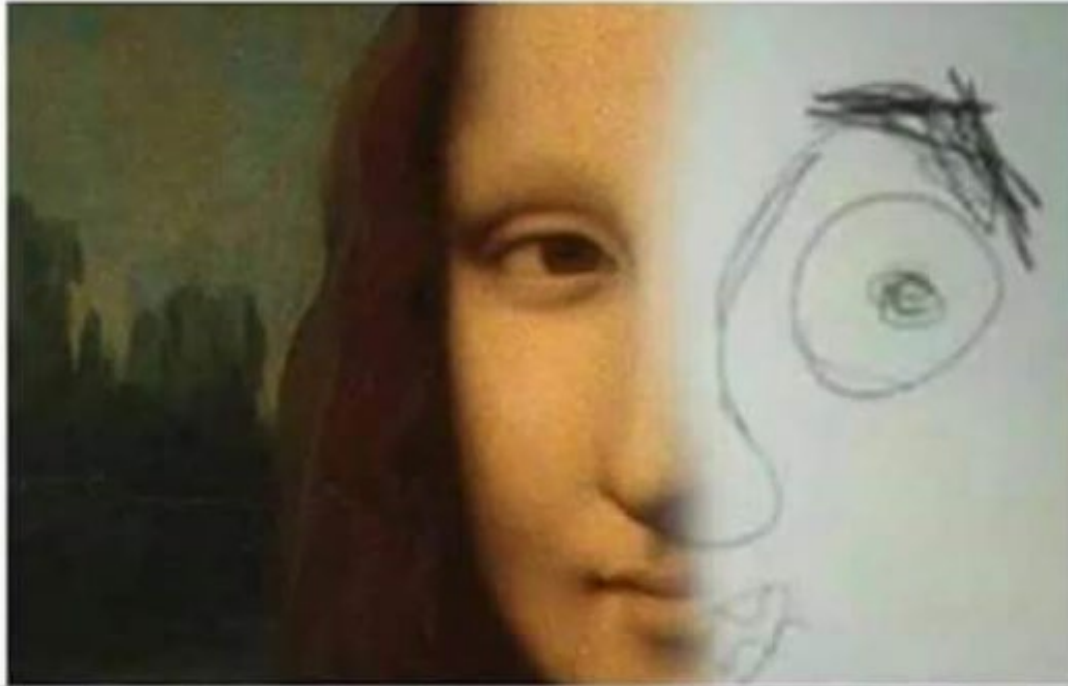
A top-down view of a group of five diverse students sitting around a light-colored wooden table. They are engaged in collaborative work, with papers, notebooks, and laptops scattered on the table. One student is writing in a notebook, another is looking at a laptop, and others are looking at papers. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor setting like a library or study area.

Group Work: Tips for Success

MULTILINGUAL STUDENT SUPPORT (MSS)

CAMOSUN COLLEGE

You make half of the assignment and I'll make the other half and then we'll join them together





Introduction

- Group work helps facilitate learning
- Well-functioning groups = positive learning experience
- Dysfunctional groups = nightmare?
- *How can we avoid the pitfalls of group work?*

Contents

- Purpose of group work
- **Tips for starting strong**
 - Icebreakers
 - Group Roles
 - Group contract
- **Tips for Working together**
 - Intercultural groups
 - Dealing with conflict
 - Tone to avoid conflict
 - What makes a good group member?
- **Resources**



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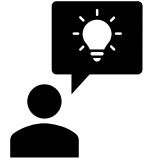


Why do group work?

Most valuable skill development takes place as the group works together. The process is just as important as the product.

- Leadership
- Organization
- Sharing ideas / Negotiating in Speaking/Writing
- Problem solving
- Conflict management
- Responsibility to others

Consider:



Think of an unsuccessful group that you were part of (work, study, sports, music). What are some things that made it unsuccessful?

How about a successful group that you were part of? What are some things that made it successful?

For you, what makes a good team member?

"Your long-term success depends on how well you communicate with your boss, co-workers, and customers, and whether you can be an effective and contributing team member."

-Guffey et al. (2016), p. 35



Tips for Starting Strong

Icebreakers

Don't rush the getting-to-know-you phase.

- Ask questions and report answers to group; or find things in common.
- Discuss what 'responsibility,' 'fair distribution of work,' and 'respectful communication' mean to you and your group members.
- Clarify any questions about assignment.



Group Roles

Identify different strengths of each team member. It helps to choose group roles:

- Organizer
- Facilitator
- Researcher
- Writer
- Editor
- Designer, etc.

Many SURVEYS to match personality with group skills:

- Fisher's "[5-minute personality test](#)" or Univ. of Kent's "[Teamworking skills](#)"



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Group Contract

Agree to ground rules and sign.

- Create a group contract including:
 - Contact information
 - Communication methods
 - Respectful communication rules
 - Schedule of regular outside-class meetings
 - Initial roles (& rotation schedule)
 - Rules for work completion & consequences for incomplete work



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Tips for Working Together

Intercultural Groups

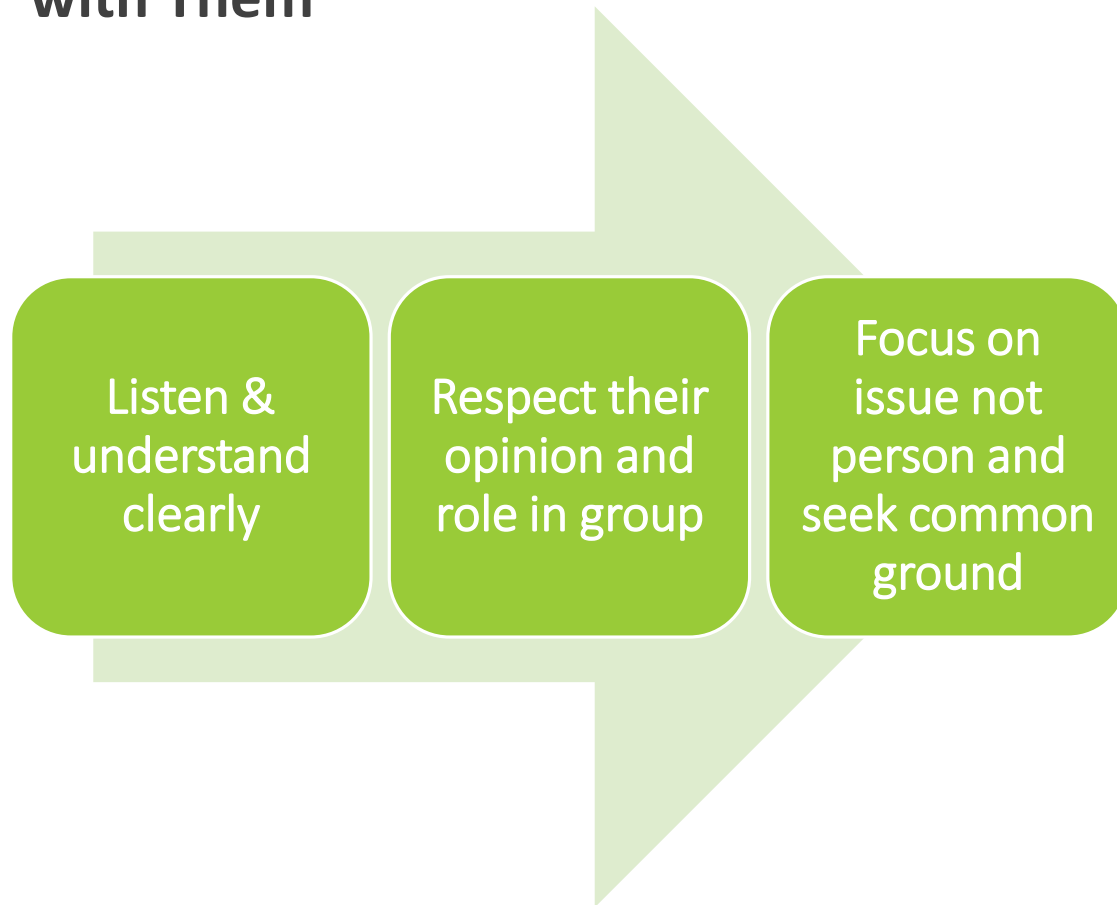
- Groups from diverse cultures take time to cohere but have better outcomes than same-culture groups. (deVita, 2001)
- Why?
 - Variety of ideas/experiences
 - Avoid 'Groupthink'
 - Can't assume shared expectations: clear communication essential
 - Less familiar = more professional
- Remember that Intercultural Competence is an important skill to develop
- But it takes work: encourage, focus on team-building



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Dealing with Conflict

Conflicts Happen – It's How You Deal with Them



Member Conflicts

- Classic problem members: "Lone Wolves" "Dominators" "Freeloaders"
- Don't Assume Personality Problem. Usually underlying issue(s):
 - Language difficulties
 - Cultural differences
 - Stress / Time pressures
 - Lack of confidence

Tone to Avoid Conflict

POTENTIAL CONFLICT (MOST DIRECT)

- Why aren't you getting back to us?
- That won't work.
- You're so quiet.

MORE NEUTRAL (KINDER/SOFTER)

- We miss having you in our group discussions. We **understand** everyone is busy, but we **would really appreciate** your help with this project. Can we arrange a better time to meet perhaps? **What works for you?**
- Are you sure? Can we check the textbook/instructions/ask the instructor?
- Hey ____ (name). I've noticed you've been pretty quiet over there. Do you like the ideas we have so far to ... ?

What Makes a Good Team Member?

CAN THIS BE YOU?

- Accepts value of rules and follows them
- Builds the team up - stays positive and encourages others
- Focuses on solutions, not the problem or person



Photo by Rodnae Productions for Pexels



Conclusion

Focus on the PROCESS as much as the product

- Teamwork skills are essential for future work

Take time to build positive working relationships

- Agree on rules --> create a Team Contract

Conflicts will happen

- Resolving them respectfully will make your team stronger

Think positive

- Group bond may extend beyond project – study group, future network, or FRIENDS!

**teamwork
makes the
dreamwork**



Resources

- Learn more at Camosun's excellent 'Group Work' learning skills guide
 - <https://camosun.libguides.com/Groupwork/groups>
- See this example Team Contract from Camosun's School of Business
 - https://camosun.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=35753515
- See the **Extra Resources: Group Work** file provided on D2L (from Cristina)
- See “Giving and Receiving Feedback” presentation:
 - <https://camosunmss.opened.ca/academic-english-support/self-access-study-resources/study-skills/#giving-feedback>

Reflect: What are some things we talked about that you can apply to your next group project?

How was the workshop today?
Take a minute to give feedback:



Need more help?

Camosun Library Student Learning Success Guides

https://camosun.libguides.com/Student_learning_success_guides

Camosun Writing Centre and Learning Skills

<https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills>

Your school's Multilingual Support Specialist (MSS)

<http://camosunmss.opened.ca>



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