THINGS EFFECTIVE GROUPS DO

Make Decisions

Group members must make some decision in order to move forward. Decisions lead to action.

Forge a Consensus

Groups will come to an answer or solution to which every member is in agreement. If this happens, "I" statements can become "we" statements and the group takes ownership of its work. Nobody is singled out for blame.

Maintain Open and Full Communication

It is the responsibility of each group member to speak up when he/she does not understand something. No person in class is a mind-reader, so if there is something you need clarified, please speak up.

Listen Accurately and Respectfully

Because speaking up can be a moment of vulnerability, please listen carefully to one another. Be sure to minimize interruptions and give attention to the person speaking.

Build Trust

As groups spend time together, patterns of behavior will form and you will begin to trust one another. Be sure to do what people expect of you, and also be sure to be authentic in group situations.

Manage Conflict

Because people have different backgrounds and different experiences and different opinions, conflict is inevitable. Use the skills to manage it when it arrives.

Encourage Everyone to Participate

Sometimes people tend to be quiet and may not voice their opinions. In those times, simply saying "What do you think?" may lead to new insights.

Make Sure No One Gets Left Behind

Even though you are individually accountable for course material, you should stick together in the process of learning the material. If you miss the class, reach out to group members.

Change One's Mind Only When Persuaded by Evidence and Arguments

Because members will have different levels of status in groups, social factors often lead to students changing their minds for reasons other than logic. Encourage members to stand firm with their position until valid reasoning causes them to change perspective.

Criticize the Idea and Not the Person

To change one's mind, one person's idea must have been proven inadequate. During the conversation it is important to not say things that attack the person; saying "You are wrong" becomes personal but saying "I disagree with that idea because" lends itself to positive communication.