Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy (βETA)
Karalyne Sperling, Principal

# Collaborative Learning Guide




## Group projects

Learning and working in groups involves shared and/or learned values, resources, and ways of doing things. Effective groups learn to succeed by combining these factors. Your group, and each individual within it, will only be as effective as they are willing to respect differences within the group.

### Summary of the entire process:

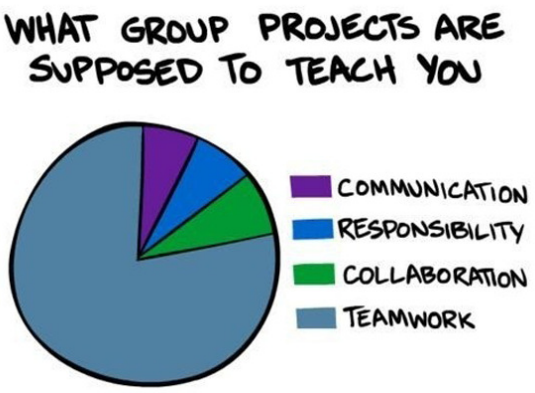
At the first meeting, all participants:

1. Introduce themselves with what they bring to the project, their interests, qualifications, and even preferences in ideas.
2. Determine a person who will keep participants on task. This is determined by your first group process, and should consider who would like to volunteer, experience and expertise with the task, and even a desire to learn about group tasks.
3. Determine the strategy of how often to meet in person or through technology, where the group will meet, communicating including email and (cell) phone information, and how to distribute notes and updates.
4. Summarize objectives:
   Strategy: each member independently writes down one or two main objectives of the project, then the group compares these, extracts key words and phrases, then rank results. If agreement cannot be reached, refer the matter to the teacher. Group members should realize that this is a procedural situation, and not a matter for controversy or heated argument.
5. Determine process to achieve the objectives:

   What is the timeline? What are the deliverables and when are they needed? Do you need sub-groups? What applications do you need (word processing, spread sheets, presentation software (PowerPoint), Website, etc.

### Process stages:

1. Research discovery: library, Internet, professional associations, experts, etc.
2. Research analysis: often in the process, difficulties appear: consolidation and identifying key concepts and issues mid-stream check-in, planning for gaps, requests for assistance, etc.
3. Product development:
   Development of a thesis statement, individual sections
4. Write/compile document or presentation
   Opening | body | closing statement/argument
5. Bibliography
6. Review and evaluation
   Product | process | participation
7. Project summary
8. Rehearsal for presentation
9. Presentation
10. Celebration



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**More on group projects**

- **Interaction within the group** is based upon mutual respect and encouragement.
- **Often creativity is vague.** Ideas are important to the success of the project, not personalities. A group's strength lies in its ability to develop ideas individuals bring.
- Conflict can be an extension of creativity. The group should be aware of this eventuality. Resolution of conflict balances the end goals with mutual respect. In other words, a group project is a cooperative, rather than a competitive, learning experience.

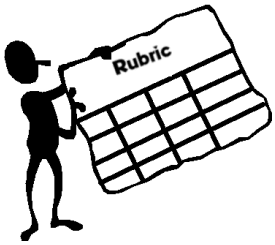



**The two major objectives of a group project are:**

- What is learned: factual material as well as the process
- What is produced: written paper, presentation, and/or media project

**Role of instructors/teachers/professors:**

- Outcomes depend on the clarity of the objective(s) given by teachers.
- The group's challenge is to interpret these objectives, and then determine how to meet them.
- Group work is only as effective as students ask teachers for instructors to manage and guide their process.
- Students must be aware of, and should be prepared for, this group process.




**Grading:**

Most group projects are based upon a rubric evaluation. This will contain individual contribution as well as a team grade.




Keeping it together is progress.
Working together is success.

**Why you complete group projects:**

**As a team member, you:**

- develop and share a common goal
- contribute your understanding of the problem: questions, insights and solutions
- respond to, and work to understand, others' questions, insights and solutions.
  Each member empowers the other to speak and contribute,
  and to consider their contributions
- are accountable to others, and they are accountable to you
- are dependent on others, and they depend on you

