**Busting Myths about Successful Group Work**

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| **Common Misguided Assumptions about Group Work** | **Realities in Group Work** |
| Groups have a single leader. | Leadership is distributed among group members. |
| Group leadership is about dominating and directing. | Effective group leaders seek consensus and equitable participation. |
| There is a single best way to accomplish the task at hand. | As in most of life, there is no single right answer. Successful groups stay open to ideas and stay flexible in the face of inevitable obstacles. |
| Persons who are quiet do not comprehend or are disinterested in the assignment. | Persons who are quiet have numerous contributions to make and it is the group’s responsibility to actively make the space for those contributions to emerge and be taken seriously. |
| English language learners cannot contribute to the task at the same level as fluent English speakers. | Fluent English speakers should not assume a lack of understanding or motivation on the part of language learners; often differences in cultural expectations are at play. |
| Intellectual understanding is the most important contribution a person can make. | Intellectual understanding is important but group members that promote consensus building, reflection, empathy, and conflict resolution are especially successful group members. |
| Mistakes and a lack of understanding are problematic for a group’s function. | Mistakes and a lack of understanding are necessary in the learning process. Willingness to ask questions and learn from mistakes are key to successful group function and the production of high-quality products. |
| Group members should all communicate and participate in a specific way. | Persons from different backgrounds have different cultural expectations for communication and participation. Everyone in the group should work to expand the areas in which they are skilled and comfortable. No single communication or participation style should be expected. |
| All members of the group have the same amount of time to devote to the project. | Many students have life responsibilities beyond coursework. While all members of the group need to make substantial contributions to the project, some flexibility around deadlines may be necessary. |
| It is OK in group work to allow other persons to do more of the work. | Not carrying your share of the effort in a group is especially disrespectful and damaging to an academic community. If you find yourself in a situation in which you are having difficulty completing tasks, the responsible thing to do is to speak with your group members and/or your faculty. We can more than likely work out a solution. |
| It is OK in group work to remain disengaged and to follow the lead of others. | All members of a group should engage in the intellectual and psychosocial work of the group. Everyone needs to share their ideas, take responsibility for an aspect of the project, and step into situations and behaviors that may be unfamiliar (e.g., if you are a quiet person, you should try to talk more; if you are an active talker, you should practice more listening skills). |

**Source:** Mulnix, Amy B. 2022. “Getting Realistic about Group Work.” *The Teaching Professor*, June 27, 2022. <https://www.teachingprofessor.com/topics/teaching-strategies/group-work/getting-realistic-about-group-work>