Tips for Effective Group Working

An effective group work together to complete a task in an agreed time, with each member contributing to the team according to their skills, experience and personality.

There are various stages that you will go through in a group project to achieve a task. Planning is critical to effective group work and will give you direction and help you coordinate your work in order for efficient task completion. The following guidelines should help you make a start with your task:

- First of all it is important to establish a set of group guidelines. Get to know the members in your group, their strengths and preferred ways of working. Try to recognise that everyone has an opinion and that individuals have different methods of working and learning.
- It is advisable to appoint a group leader and also a scribe to record the group's activities.
- Discuss the group's task or activity in order to reach a shared understanding.
- Summarise the shared understanding of the problem on a board or piece of paper.
- Discuss how you are going to approach the problem. Brainstorm to create ideas, plans and tasks for your group. Everyone should be involved in discussion and in agreement on what direction the group is taking and why.
- Decide on specific tasks and allocate them to individuals or subgroups. The subdivision of the problem or topic into smaller tasks may already be apparent to some extent by the wording of the question. However, it may be necessary for you to read around the topic first to facilitate the division of the task and identify particular interests. Make sure you are clear on everyone else's tasks in order to prevent duplication.
- Ensure that each group member has responsibility and accountability for their task with an agreed deadline.
- Once you have decided on your tasks and roles it is vital that you arrange regular meetings to review your progress and decide on what direction your work should take next. Each member should attend these meetings.
- Consider a time-line for your project, this is particularly important for longer projects: Set dates for the completion of specific tasks.
- Any resources, information or knowledge should be shared.

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