

This article refers to 'group' but 'team' fits just as well.

Encouraging self-awareness and reflection in group work

One of the most important things you can do as an instructor is to have students reflect regularly on their group experiences. Their self-reflection will reinforce and further develop critical teamwork skills. Based on your objectives for the group project, create a set of prompts using the questions below. Have students then use these prompts to journal about their reactions to group climate and process. The journals encourage self-reflection and can help students see teamwork issues in new ways and create ideas for resolution. They can also provide a good basis from which students can choose comments to share with their group members in debriefing sessions. If students submit their journals periodically throughout the semester, give them feedback orally or in writing, and to the extent appropriate, discuss in class any trends that you have identified through observation or in the journals (e.g., reassure groups that many are facing similar challenges). Also, requiring all students to submit a final reflective report after the group project can help them to see the value of the teamwork expertise they have developed through practice.

Climate

- What have you enjoyed the most/the least about getting to know your group members?
- How is your attitude towards your group members demonstrated in how you function within the group?
- How do you demonstrate trust and openness towards the other members and their ideas?
- Do you give honest opinions? If not, why not?
- How much do you feel you can rely on your group members to complete the required task(s)?
- How do you make sure that group members feel supported, encouraged, and appreciated for their work?
- How does the team ensure that all voices are heard?
- Do you participate willingly in the discussion? If not, why not?
- Do others appear to understand your ideas? If not, why not?
- What do you do if another person's ideas are unclear?
- What do you focus on when others speak? How could you improve your listening skills?
- How do you respond to others' ideas? How do they respond to yours? What could be improved?

Process

- What are your group's ground rules and goals? What changes to these rules and goals might improve the functioning of your group?
- How is everyone encouraged to stay accountable to the tasks they have been assigned?
- To what extent do you and others follow the feedback methods laid out in class? How could you and your group members improve the way you give and receive feedback?

- To what extent does your group reflect on how well its goals are being achieved? How would more (or less) discussion about goals help or hinder your group's functioning?
- How are decisions made in your group? Who is involved and in which ways? What has been effective about the processes you have used? How could your decision-making processes be improved?
- What happens if a group member is unhappy or uncomfortable with a decision made by the group?
- What conflicts have arisen within your group? How (if at all) have the conflicts been resolved? What role do you play in resolving these conflicts? What could you (or others) do to improve your group's ability to deal productively with conflict?
- How do your meetings typically proceed? What do you accomplish and in how much time? What is effective about your group functioning during meetings? What changes would improve your meetings?
- Who has emerged as the leader in your group? Which other roles do you see team members playing? Which role(s) do you play? Which role do you prefer and why?

Are We a Team?" checklist (Levin & Kent, 2001)

Check off the statements that accurately represent your group. Be prepared to discuss your choices afterwards with your group. Also consider ways to improve your group's functioning, especially as it relates to the statements you did not check off.

- We all show equal commitment to our objective.
- We all take part in deciding how work should be allocated.
- We are committed to helping each other learn.
- We acknowledge good contributions from team members.
- We handle disagreements and conflicts constructively within the team.
- We are able to give constructive criticism to one another and to accept it ourselves.
- We all turn up to meetings and stay to the end.
- We are good at making sure that everyone knows what's going on.
- When one of us is under pressure, others offer to help him or her.
- We trust each other.
- We remain united even when we disagree.
- We support each other to outsiders.
- We feel comfortable and relaxed with one another.

Source: <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/tips-students/being-part-team/teamwork-skills-being-effective-group-member>
