Group Work

**What is Group Work? Group work:**

* has a membership of two or more people
* encourages a sense of shared identity and common goals among members
* promotes a feeling of interaction and interdependence among members
* instils in its members a sense of achieving something together

**How to Work Effectively in a Group?**

* Get to know everyone in the group.
* Ensure that all group members feel comfortable with each other.
* Make sure that everybody knows everyone’s name and contact details.
  + Leave no one out of the discussion. Include people who:
    - are naturally quiet; and
    - do not speak English as their first language.
  + Consider everyone’s needs and expectations.

**Some Common Problems Associated with Group Work**

* Group work is usually assessed.
* Students do not want their grade based on the effort of other people.
* Students are usually resentful of those in their group who do not pull their weight.
* There is much resentment about group members who do not turn up or who do not stay on track.

**Resolving Group Conflicts**

* Do not get angry and frustrated with your group members.
* Resolve the problems that you encounter.
* Discover the real problem and find a solution.

**Tip: Do a SWOT Analysis of your Group**

**SWOT stands for Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats**

* What are your group work strengths? What do you already like about group work and the way that you perform in a group?
* What are your weaknesses? What do you really dislike about group work and/or your own performance in groups?
* What opportunities are there for you in group work?
* What threats?
* Discuss your answers with a friend.
* What do the answers tell you about yourself?
* What are you going to differently next time?
* What are you going to do now?

Source Adapted from: Burns, T & Sandra, S 2009, *Essential study skills: the complete guide to success at university*, 2nd edn, Sage, London.