

Getting Started

Before implementing cooperative learning, both instructors and students must prepare.

The instructor should know how to structure group work so

- each person feels they need, depend and value the team.
- members engage and communicate with each other.
- no member gets a 'free ride' at the expense of others.
- members reflect on, and improve, their ability to work cooperatively.

An instructor's next task is to prepare students who may have had negative past experiences or have unrealistic expectations of teamwork. Providing discussion questions about things that can happen and information about how to deal with them can help prepare groups for teamwork.

The students can discuss these questions in or outside of class. Written answers should be handed in. They may be discussed with the entire class so everyone benefits.

- What factors lead to a successful group work, base on your past experiences?
- What causes groups to fail or become non-productive?
- What do other people do that really bothers you when working on a joint project?
- What steps will you take those negative conditions appeared in your group?
- What does the project require?
- How will work be divided, performed, shared, reported and written?