Sample Group Work Problem-Solving Tips

Before a group project, it is helpful to talk through what to do if there are problems in the group. College-age students can be expected to first do their best to resolve the issues with their group members, reaching out to their instructor for support if needed.

Consider meeting with the group to model conflict resolution rather than just talking to some of the group members. Communication and conflict resolution are invaluable soft skills that can be practiced through the group work process.

Listed below are four common group work problems and possible processes to give your students.

A group member won't respond to our emails and texts.
If you have tried several times and provided at least 48 hours for a response, go ahead and schedule a group work session. Provide them with the time and place, and if there is no response and the group member does not attend the work session, let me [instructor] know.

A group member is not doing their share of the work.
First, talk as a group, being sure to reference the task sheet you all agreed to. If the group member continues to lag, please let me [instructor] know. It is likely that this group member will be re-assigned.

A group member has taken over and won't let anyone else do meaningful work.
First, talk as a group to respectfully share your concerns. If this doesn't resolve the issue, please contact me [instructor], and we can set up a time to meet to work out the differences.

A group member is argumentative and extremely difficult.
First, talk as a group. Kindly and respectfully share your concerns. If things aren't better, please contact me [instructor], and we can set up a time for all of us to meet to work out the differences.