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How many infants do you know that could walk before they could crawl? Perhaps some, but not many I suspect. How many toddlers do you know that ran before they walked? Parents create the conditions for their children to learn and grow and so must we as teachers create the conditions for student teams to flourish. **Newly formed groups of students need to be given time to walk before they can run, especially if the students have little familiarity with one another, or their program of study (Level 1 students for example).** *It isn't reasonable for teachers to expect students to work effectively in groups without some guidelines for doing so.*

If you have decided to use groups in your classroom it is likely that you are aware that they will take some organization. Teams need to be formed and their purpose needs to be defined. You will also have to manage the 'lone wolves' who let you know that they dislike group work and ask your permission to work alone. You will also spend some time guiding the teams along the way and troubleshooting issues that develop. Some of the following information might be helpful in getting your groups of students off to a good start.

Create the conditions for student teams to flourish

STEP 1 Tell your students <u>early</u> that team work is a part of your course.
Although team work may not begin until later in your course, tell your students on the first day of classes that they will work in groups eventually and then remind them about this fact at various check-in points along the way when you review deadlines in class. This allows students ample time to think about who they might like to work with (if you will allow them to select their own team mates) and time for the lone wolves to approach you with their dilemma (more on them later).

STEP 2 Train your students over time to work in teams by interjecting team work theory and team work activities throughout your lectures. Dedicating even a little time to this will pay off big time in the long run!
Spend (invest!) some class time teaching your students a few things about working in teams *before* you ask them to begin functioning as one. This is the 'walk before you run' concept in action.

> Here's both the problem and the promise of cooperation. Humans aren't hard-wired to succeed or fail at it. We can go either way. In her study of groupwork in school classrooms, the late Stanford sociologist Elizabeth Cohen found that if kids are simply put into teams and told to solve a problem, the typical result is one kid dominating and others looking totally disengaged.
>
> But if teachers take the time to establish norms, roles, goals, etc. - "not only will [students] behave according to the new norms, but they will enforce rules on other group members." Perhaps to a fault. "Even very young students," Cohen wrote, "can be heard lecturing to other members of the group on how they ought to be behaving."

Excerpted from: *How to Build A Great Team*, by Jerry Useem, Fortune, June 1, 2006
http://money.cnn.com/2006/05/31/magazines/fortune/intro_greatteams_fortune_061206/index.htm

Most students can relate to an earlier sports team experience, or being in a school band or choir, or working on the high school debate team or on a student's council. Draw on these experiences in your

USING GROUPS IN THE CLASSROOM

These Groups are Made for Walkin

Organization Tips for Professors

WALK

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College classrooms. You may also find that your students are currently part of other teams at College— have them share those experiences.

Students need to understand group roles, norms, and goals in order to function effectively in groups.

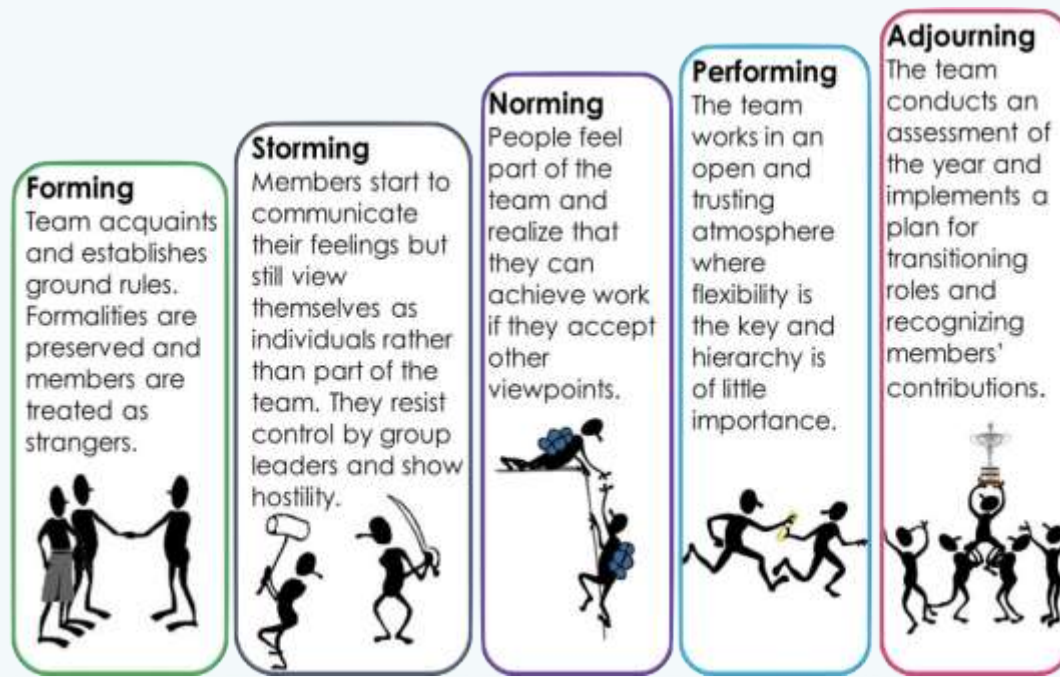Here are a few things you could use to help educate your students about working in groups.

Tuckman's Theory of Group Development:

https://depts.washington.edu/oei/resources/changeModels/mc_team_development.pdf
Exposure to these concepts will help students understand that their group will go through stages as they work together and that with those stages they may experience certain emotions in themselves and others.

Teach **your students about how their team might feel at different stages of development.**

TIME TO DELIVER: 10-30 minutes depending on how in-depth you go into each stage.

Forming
Team acquaints and establishes ground rules. Formalities are preserved and members are treated as strangers.

Storming
Members start to communicate their feelings but still view themselves as individuals rather than part of the team. They resist control by group leaders and show hostility.

Norming
People feel part of the team and realize that they can achieve work if they accept other viewpoints.

Performing
The team works in an open and trusting atmosphere where flexibility is the key and hierarchy is of little importance.

Adjourning
The team conducts an assessment of the year and implements a plan for transitioning roles and recognizing members' contributions.

1 Graphic taken from: http://facilitatingenterprise.wordpress.com/2013/02/05/tuckmans-theory

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Group Norm Setting: A Critical Skill for Effective Classroom Groups

http://www.wcu.edu/facctr/mountainrise/MR_1_1_PDF/MR_1_1_Phipps.pdf

Norms are unspoken and often unwritten, informal rules that govern individual behavior in a group. Group norms vary based on the group. Without group norms, individuals would have no understanding of how to act in these social situations. Norms form in a variety of ways. Sometimes they develop through *primacy*—the first behaviour pattern the team undertakes sticks (e.g.: begin their very first meeting with a social discussion of their weekend) and carries on for the duration the group works together. Sometimes a leader will define/state a norm for a group (e.g.: the group leader says 'We will begin every meeting with a reading of our mission statement.').

Teach your students what group norms are and how to develop useful ones.

TIME TO DELIVER: 10-30 minutes depending on how in-depth you get.

Group Roles

http://www.stanford.edu/group/resed/resed/staffresources/RM/training/grouproles.html

There are many versions of this information—find one that works for your situation. Most organizational behaviour textbooks contain a chapter on group dynamics, and there is a good deal of information online.

Group Roles	
Coordinator	performs gatekeeping functions; make sure everyone has chance to participate and is participating, responsible for making sure different aspects of the project are synthesized
Organizer	responsible ensuring the group works together as a whole and that the parts of the project are put together seamlessly
Manager	responsible for roles being executed effectively and successfully
Liaison	responsible for e-mailing/submitting scheduled updated to the instructor
Conciliator	responsible for mediating conflict, taking appropriate steps in resolution
Initiator	responsible for starting different aspect of the project / gets the ball rolling
Tech Person	responsible for troubleshooting any technology problems and/or seeking out answers to any such problems
Recorder	keeps group on time during any F2F or online meetings; responsible for making sure deadlines are met

2 Graphic taken from: http://topr.online.ucf.edu/index.php/Group_Discussion_Strategy

Teach your students about the various constructive roles they could adopt on their team.

TIME TO DELIVER: 10-30 minutes depending on how in-depth you get.

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Belbin Team Role Type	Description & Contribution	Allowable Weaknesses
RESOURCE INVESTIGATOR	Extrovert, enthusiastic, communicative. Explores opportunities. Develops contacts.	Over-optimistic. Loses interest once initial enthusiasm has passed.
COORDINATOR	Mature, confident, a good chairperson. Clarifies goals, promotes decision-making, delegates well.	Can often be seen as manipulative. Delegates personal work.
TEAMWORKER	Co-operative, mild, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens, builds, averts friction, calms the waters.	Indecisive in crunch situations. Can be easily influenced.
PLANT	Creative, imaginative, unorthodox. Solves difficult problems.	Ignores details. Too pre-occupied to communicate effectively.
SHAPER	Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Has the drive and courage to overcome obstacles.	Can provoke others. Tends to hurt people's feelings
MONITOR EVALUATOR	Sober, strategic and discerning. Sees all options. Judges accurately.	Lacks drive and ability to inspire others. Overly critical.
IMPLEMENTER	Disciplined, reliable, conservative and efficient. Turns ideas into practical actions	Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities.
COMPLETER	Painstaking, conscientious, anxious. Searches out errors and omissions. Delivers on time.	Inclined to worry unduly. Reluctant to delegate. Can be a nit-picker.
SPECIALIST	Single-minded, self-starting, dedicated. Provides knowledge and skills in rare supply.	Contributes only on a narrow front. Dwells on technicalities. Overlooks the 'big picture'

3 Graphic taken from: http://www.pacificconsulting.com.au/services/leadership/belbin_model.html

STEP 3 Organize your students in to teams keeping in mind team size:

Size: keep the size of your teams small; team size may depend upon the number of students in your class, the task you will have the teams complete, or other objectives you may have for the work groups. About 4-5 team members seems to work well; use an odd number if you expect the teams to use a voting process for decision making.

Online Article on team size: Is Your Team Too Big? Too Small? What's the Right Number
http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=1501

STEP 4 Have each student team choose/elect a team representative (Liaison/Project Manager):

This will be the student in charge of liaison with the Professor and handling the flow of information or documents that might move between the team and the Professor. I have found this model to work very well as it provides a single point of contact for each team (makes you very happy when you have two sections of a course each with 10 or more teams!).

STEP 5 Keep a record of the names of the students in each group:

I like to post a very short form/document on my College's course management system (CMS) that I require the team rep to complete, and then upload back in to an electronic 'Dropbox' in the CMS that I can access from anywhere. The form asks each team to provide a list of the full names of the students on the team, and a team name. I like each team to create a name as I find this helps to provide them

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with a sense of group identity and also assist with the identification of each team on the course management system.

STEP 6 Have each team create a Team Charter/Contract:

What is a Team Charter? A Team Charter consists of a series of questions that should be answered by each team/group. The purpose of the Team Charter is to lay out the ground rules under which the team will function for the duration of their time together. The Team Charter is like a policies manual, or a roadmap, for the newly formed team. It can offer guidelines to students about meeting times and frequency, decision making conduct, workload expectations, and grade achievement.

When should I use a Team Charter? Whenever you have students work on a group project for any length of time you should have them create a Team Charter. The Team Charter should be one of the first tasks a newly formed team works on.

Should the Team Charter be worth any marks? I have found the most success when I attach a grade to the Team Charter, even 5% for example, seems to create a better buy-in and a greater willingness by each team to create the Team Charter and take it seriously.

Sample Team Charters Can Be Found at:

Team Charter Exercise, Learning Technologies Inc.
http://www.teamlti.com/charter/page0/page0.html

Team Charters
Getting your teams off to a great start
http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_95.htm

How to Create a Team Charter for Success
By Denise O'Berry | Posted on April 11, 2011
http://quickbase.intuit.com/blog/2011/04/11/how-to-create-a-team-charter-for-success

How to Grow Effective Teams
by Ends of the Earth Learning Group 1998
http://www.endsoftheearth.com/HTMLTeams/Chap2.htm

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STEP 7   Create a Professor Check-in/Check-Point Process:

Create a process that has you checking in regularly with each group. It can help to set aside 10 minutes at the end of every other class to check in with each team. You can request that team members sit together and then you can quickly circulate to each group for a short chat. Your goal here is to get a sense of which teams are experiencing difficulty and not to provide assistance at this stage (no time). I encourage groups that feel they are struggling to write down their team Liaison's name and email address so that I can connect with them online and arrange a time to meet (not enough time to hold a proper intervention meeting during the last 10 minutes of class) to discuss the matter in detail and work on solutions and problem-solving.

STEP 8   Consider Having Groups Submit a Draft Assignment

I find that it is good practice to build in marks for submitting at least one draft copy of an assignment. I keep the draft simple enough to be worth only a few marks (5% ?) and basic enough in content requirement so that it does not require too much work on behalf of the team, but allows the team an opportunity to see if they are on the right track before submitting a final assignment of greater value. It can also give the team practice at working together, brainstorming, assimilating ideas, and group decision making. This process seems to help the 'lone wolves' feel more confident about the quality of group work and working with others for marks.

STEP 9   Consider Using Peer Evaluations

Using a peer evaluation process to account for a portion of a team grade can be one way to cut down on the threat of social loafing. To be most affective, make sure the student teams know in advance that they will evaluate the contribution levels of their team mates at the end of the team work process. There are a variety of peer evaluation forms you can use.

Sample form at: http://www.dailyteachingtools.com/images/500DoubleForm.jpg

Final Word
The remainder of this handout was excerpted from:
http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/instructionalstrategies/groupprojects/benefits.html

Benefits for Students
Group projects can help students develop a host of skills that are increasingly important in the professional world (Caruso & Woolley, 2008; Mannix & Neale, 2005).

Positive group experiences, moreover, have been shown to contribute to student learning, retention and overall college success (Astin, 1997; Tinto, 1998; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2006).

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Properly structured, group projects can reinforce skills that are relevant to both group and individual work, including the ability to:

- Break complex tasks into parts and steps
- Plan and manage time
- Refine understanding through discussion and explanation
- Give and receive feedback on performance
- Challenge assumptions
- Develop stronger communication skills.

Group projects can also help students develop skills specific to collaborative efforts, allowing students to...

- Tackle more complex problems than they could on their own.
- Delegate roles and responsibilities.
- Share diverse perspectives.
- Pool knowledge and skills.
- Hold one another (and be held) accountable.
- Receive social support and encouragement to take risks.
- Develop new approaches to resolving differences.
- Establish a shared identity with other group members.
- Find effective peers to emulate.
- Develop their own voice and perspectives in relation to peers.

While the potential learning benefits of group work are significant, simply assigning group work is no guarantee that these goals will be achieved. In fact, group projects can–and often do–backfire badly when they are not designed, supervised, and assessed in a way that promotes meaningful teamwork and deep collaboration.

Link to video "Changing Education Paradigms" (by Sir Ken Robinson):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U