

Suggestions for Running an Effective Task Group Meeting

Students from previous years make the following recommendations for running task group:

Prepare ahead for the meeting: Use Blackboard to discuss ideas about what you might do in the next task group meeting. If the group decides on a particular textbook task ahead of time, everyone should read that exercise before group.

Be on time and be prepared: Let people know if you are going to be absent or late. Remember, there are a limited number of times you can be absent or late, and then points are deducted. Allow a maximum of five minutes for people to show up, then start group without them.

Select a Task Leader: Take turns being task leader for the day. People may want to volunteer for being task leader depending on the type of task it is. If possible, decide on the task leader ahead of time, perhaps by discussing it on Blackboard. The assigned leader may want to prepare for the meeting. Facilitators should not be the task leader.

Respect the responsibilities of the task leader: It's not easy being task leader. People may get annoyed with him/her. Try to respect the responsibilities of the task leader, which include:

1. Encouraging everyone to express their ideas and opinions
2. Guiding the group into making decisions, hopefully by encouraging consensus, but if not, then by calling for a vote
3. Asking for volunteers for specific tasks, or assigning them if no one is volunteering.
4. Asking disruptive people to be quiet and to behave properly
5. Making "small" decisions for the group, if necessary

Set time limits: Discuss and set time limits on the preliminary discussion, decision-making, and the different components of the task. Someone should be given the job of keeping track of time.

Ask for suggestions and feedback from the facilitator: The facilitators should not be running the group, but ask them for their observations about what is happening in the group and for their suggestions.

Respect each other.

Give constructive feedback to improve behaviors.

Be willing to compromise.