



# CRSP

Canadian Restructured School Plan  
Le Projet D'une École Canadienne Restructurée

**Working with Others**

*CRSP is a project of the*



Canadian Vocational Association  
Association canadienne de la formation professionnelle

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### *About this Learner Guide . . .*

Glenlawn Collegiate Institute of Winnipeg, Manitoba, has implemented a series of graduation outcomes that a student must achieve in order to receive a Glenlawn Certificate. There is a comprehensive learner guide for each outcome. Some of the learner guides require students to work toward the outcome throughout their high-school career.

This sample contains material from the learner guide for the outcome stated as follows:

“The student is able to work with and accept others.”

*The original learner guide has been modified somewhat to fit the CRSP learner guide format.*

## **Why study the topic?**

If you survey people from many different walks of life and ask them to name the skills, knowledge and attitudes they regard as essential for success in life, you'll find that they inevitably list the ability to work with others somewhere near the top of the list. Whether they are students, teachers, parents, business people, employers or employees, school board trustees or community college representatives, “teamwork,” or some variation, appears in virtually everyone’s vision of the ideal high-school graduate.

If teamwork is prized in the real world, it is certainly something worth learning and developing further. Knowing how to work with others will help you to find success in further education or training, in the world of work, as a citizen, and as a family member.

This learner guide is meant to be used as a resource tool. You may use it as a resource for:

- generating ideas
- self-teaching if you are not familiar or confident with group work
- assisting you as you work through your group work activities and assignments
- getting remedial help if you are having difficulty with some aspect of learning how to work in groups

## What do I need to know before I begin?

No special knowledge is required to work through the activities in this guide.

## What will I know and be able to do when I have completed the guide?

After you have completed this learner guide, you will be able to say not only that you have “people skills,” but that you can *prove* you have them. The portfolio you create will contain tangible evidence that you have indeed mastered this essential life skill.

## What resources are available to help me?

Your teachers will provide you with directions on how to do excellent group work, then plenty of chances to actually work with other people in or outside of class. Don’t be afraid to ask a teacher for advice.

Here are some other resources you can use to find additional information.

### **Books**

Abrami, Philip C., et al. *Using Cooperative Learning*. Montreal: Centre for the Study of Classroom Processes, 1990.

Bevis, Joanne, et al. *Small Group Work: A Practical Guide*. Winnipeg: Manitoba Education, n.d.

Bradford, Leland. *Making Meetings Work*. La Jolla, California: University Associates, 1976.

Bramson, Robert M. *Coping With Difficult People*. New York: Dell, 1988.

- Carney, Thomas F. *No Limits to Growth: Mind-Expanding Techniques*. Winnipeg: Harbeck, 1976.
- Centre for Conflict Resolution Training. *Dealing With Anger*. Justice Institute of British Columbia, 1991.
- Cornfield, R.J., et al. *Making the Grade*. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1987.
- Cummings, Susan N. *Communication for Education*. Scranton: Intext Educational Publishers, 1971.
- Dimock, Hedley G. *Leadership and Group Development*. Guelph, Ontario: The University of Guelph, 1970.
- Dryden, Gordon, and Jeanette Vos. *The Learning Revolution*. Rolling Hills, CA: Jalmar Press, 1994.
- Earl, Lorna, and Bradley J. Cousins. *Classroom Assessment: Changing the Face; Facing the Change*. Ontario: Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation, 1996.
- Fast, Julius. *Body Language*. New York: M. Evans Publisher, 1970.
- Gall, Meredith D. *Study for Success*. Eugene, Oregon: M. Dahlen Publishers, 1985.
- Hibbard, K. Michael, et al. *A Teacher's Guide to Performance-Based Learning and Assessment*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1996.
- Jones, Stanley E., et al. *The Dynamics of Discussion: Communication in Small Groups*. New York: Harper and Row, 1980.
- Kagan, S. *Cooperative Learning Resources for Teachers*. San Juan Capistrano, California: Resources for Teachers, 1990.
- Kowitz, Albert C., and Thomas J. Knutson. *Decision Making in Small Groups: The Search for Alternatives*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1980.
- Martin, Garry, and Barbara Murphy. *The Student's Time Management Calendar*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, n.d.
- McKowan, A. *Get Your A Out of College*. Martinez, California: Northernaire Publications, 1979.

Mezick, Jan. *Using Portfolio Assessment and Integrated Thematic Instruction*. Bellevue, WA: Bureau of Education and Research, 1993.

Napier, Rodney. *Groups: Theory and Experience*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973.

Peoples, David A. *Presentation Plus -- David Peoples' Proven Technique*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1988.

Redenbach, Sandi. *Self-Esteem and Responsibility: The Necessary Ingredients for Success*. Davis, California: Esteem Seminar Programs and Publications, 1994.

Schmuck, Richard A., and Patricia A. Schmuck. *Group Processes in the Classroom*. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1971.

Schwartz, M.S., and Nancy L. McKinley. *Daily Communication: Strategies for the Language Disordered Adolescent*. Eau Claire, WI: Thinking Publications, 1984.

## **Articles**

Carducci, Bernardo J., Ph.D., and Philip G. Zimbardo, Ph.D. "Shy?" *Psychology Today*, November/December 1995.

"Hot News." *Psychology Today*, November/December 1995.

Kees, Nathalie L., and Edward Jacobs. "Conducting More Effective Groups: How to Select and Process Group Exercises." *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 15, 1 (March 1990).

McWhirter, Paula T., and J. Jeffries McWhirter. "Transition to Group Work: University Students With Learning Disabilities." *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 21, 2 (May 1996).

"Presentation Skills." *ASCD HRDP Newsletter*, Winter 1992.

Royal Bank of Canada. "Competencies: Keeping the Edge." Royal Bank Publications, 1996.

Royal Bank of Canada. "Learning Map." Royal Bank Publications, March 1996.

## **Other Resources**

Stephens, Cheryl. "Communications: Are You Listening?"  
[<http://rapport.bc.ca/cs/brief.html>]

## **How may I meet the expectations of the guide?**

Complete all the activities in this guide. If, however, you are confident that you already possess the skill or ability discussed in one of the sections of this guide, you can skim through or completely skip that particular section.

## **When should my work be done?**

This learner guide is a long-term project; it is not meant to be completed within a short period of time. Plan instead to work on this learner guide from time to time over the course of an entire school year, possibly even two school years.

## **How will I demonstrate I have met the expectations?**

By the time you reach the end of your final high school year, you will be expected to demonstrate that you are indeed able to "work with and accept others." You will do this by presenting a completed portfolio.

Your portfolio will document at least five different situations where you used group work to learn or solve problems. This may include conflict resolution. You are encouraged to develop and document teamwork skills outside of the school setting. To ensure equitable standards, however, these are subject to verification and approval by the school staff.

Your job is to seek out opportunities to learn and practice group work until you can demonstrate you have mastered it. When you feel ready, ask a teacher, coach or supervisor at work to evaluate your performance.

Here are some examples of group work situations that you could document in your portfolio:

- group work to learn or problem solve in class or lab situations
- group work to improve the performances of a sports team, drama club, band, choir, etc.
- active participation in the yearbook committee, student council, graduation committee, peer tutoring, peer counselling, leadership groups, etc.
- active participation in an ethnic or cultural organization
- active participation in such organizations as Junior Achievement, Cadets, Reserves, Guides, Scouts, etc.
- active participation in committee work
- a job that required excellent teamwork skills

All of the above must be supported by self, peer, and teacher/coach/manager evaluations. You should also include in your portfolio any supporting documentation you have. For example, you could include a certificate or award or letter of appreciation you received.

Here is an example of the type of form your teacher/evaluator will use to assess the degree to which you are able to work with and accept others.

**Evaluation of the Outcome:**  
***“The student is able to work with and accept others.”***  
**PART A**

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher Advocate:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluator:** (check one)      self  
    teacher (name): \_\_\_\_\_  
    peer  
    coach/manager: (name and position):  
    \_\_\_\_\_

**Documentation:**

*(Specify the documentation that this rubric supports. For example: “A Biology lab done in a group of three. December 4/97” or “A transactional English group research and presentation assignment regarding TV ads. Feb. 7-12, 1997.”)*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

|  | Exc. | V.G. | Not Yet | Comments |
|--|------|------|---------|----------|
| <b>1. Attendance, Preparation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is with group every time and on time</li> <li>• brings necessary materials</li> <li>• previous or preparatory tasks completed</li> </ul>  |      |      |         |          |
| <b>2. Contributing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• takes active part; contributes information &amp; ideas</li> <li>• builds on others’ ideas</li> <li>• seeks information</li> <li>• supports opinions with facts</li> <li>• stays on topic</li> <li>• does work outside of meeting times if necessary</li> </ul>   |      |      |         |          |
| <b>3. Working Co-Operatively</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• helps the group accomplish its objectives</li> <li>• assumes the role of harmonizer if necessary</li> <li>• listens carefully when others speak; hears them out</li> <li>• encourages others</li> <li>• has a positive approach</li> </ul>   |      |      |         |          |
| <b>4. Communicating</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• works to understand; may rephrase or clarify</li> <li>• avoids side conversations and outside-the-group tasks</li> <li>• avoids “killer statements,” put downs, and blaming</li> <li>• avoids repetition, showing off, and storytelling</li> <li>• acts as recorder when appropriate</li> <li>• has positive body language (eye contact, sits upright, etc.)</li> <li>• uses humour when appropriate</li> </ul> |      |      |         |          |

*Continued on the next page . . .*

**Evaluation of the Outcome:**  
***“The student is able to work with and accept others.”***  
**PART B**

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Group Management**

- helps the group get organized
- helps the group’s pace; keeps discussion moving
- accepts responsibility
- tracks, encourages and/or evaluates group progress
- helps group complete task on time
- acts as leader, recorder or monitor when appropriate

**OPTIONAL** (Teacher/Manager evaluate only if warranted)

**6. Leadership**

- sees that the task is clarified; helps the group organize
- initiates discussion
- keeps discussion on task and moving
- ensures that all parts of task are completed on time
- encourages full participation
- sees that all are treated with respect
- sees that the group’s thoughts are recorded fairly
- is objective and fair

|  |             |             |  |  |
|--|-------------|-------------|--|--|
|  |             |             |  |  |
|  | <b>Exc.</b> | <b>V.G.</b> |  |  |

In all, you must have 15 or more rubrics completed (related to 5 different occasions when you did group work). Each rubric must show either “Very Good” or “Excellent” in every category in order to be included. Try to replace any “Very Goods” with “Excellents” as you proceed through high school. The more “Excellents” you have, the more impressive your portfolio.

## What activities do I need to do?

There are five sections in the activities portion of this learner guide. They correspond to the five sections of the evaluation rubric. They can be found on the following pages:

**Section 1: Attendance, Preparation** (Pages 11 to 16)

**Section 2: Contributing** (Pages 17 to 23)

**Section 3: Working Co-Operatively** (Pages 24 to 38)

**Section 4: Communicating** (Pages 39 to 57)

**Section 5: Group Management** (Pages 58 to 72)

Depending on the evaluations you receive, you may only need to concentrate on certain specific sections in this guide. That is, if you receive a “Not Yet” in the “Contributing” category (Section 2), you should focus on this section. Turn immediately to Section 2 and get busy. You will find, however, that the sections are interconnected so that, for example, the section on communicating may include information on working co-operatively.

Good luck, and remember that every success begins with the words, “I’ll try!”

## **Section 1: Attendance, Preparation**

### **OBJECTIVE:**

**You are with the group every time and on time.**

Be aware that missing a group meeting/work session represents not just a possible failing grade for you, but jeopardizes the grades of all the other group members. You are letting down your peers.

### ***Strategies***

#### **1. If you are absent minded about time and/or dates:**

- a. Wear a watch with an alarm.
- b. Carry a pocket agenda book. In it, write down all your appointments. Check it at least twice a day. (Electronic pocket agendas are now available that can be programmed as alarms as well.)
- c. Use two large laminated monthly planning calendars, one for this month and one for the next. Place them above your bed, in your office, or in your kitchen. If possible, arrange for the calendars to come up on your computer whenever you turn it on. Transfer information between your agenda and calendars at the beginning and end of each day.
- d. Place sticky reminder notes in obvious places.
- e. Arrange for reminder calls between fellow group members. (Have a list of telephone numbers.)
- f. Ask your family/roommate to remind you of scheduled meetings.
- g. Carry a mini tape recorder and give memos to yourself.
- h. Whenever scheduling plans are made, keep your pocket agenda open or activated to avoid double booking yourself.

**2. If attendance becomes *impossible* (and not merely inconvenient):**

- a. Let the other members know as soon as possible, whether in person or by telephone or e-mail.
- b. Take it upon yourself to reschedule the meeting if, and only if, all the other members of the group are agreeable to this change.

Note: If a meeting is scheduled during class time, you are expected to be there!

**OBJECTIVES:**

**You bring the necessary materials.  
You complete the preparatory tasks.**

***Strategies***

**1. If you have trouble finding researched material:**

- a. As soon as a task is assigned/accepted, go immediately to a library or any other place you expect the material in question to be available and get it. If the material is unavailable, you may need to order it and wait for it or look for it elsewhere. This immediate action will give you the time you need to do this.
- b. Search the Internet. You might have access to the Internet at home or you may have to use the facilities at school or a library where assistance will be available upon request.

**2. If you tend to lose, misplace or forget material:**

- a. Keep all your material together at a work station (in your room, office, desk, work table, in your computer and saved to disk).
- b. Use labelled binders/folders to store all your material.
- c. Check your agenda/calendar every morning for meetings to which you have to remember to bring material. *Immediately* place the needed items in your school bag.

### **3. If you have trouble sticking to a work schedule:**

- a. Evaluate your present time use and priorities. (See the time use survey that appears on page 16 of this guide.) Think of how you can make your use of time more efficient, or cut down on such leisure activities as watching TV or playing video games. (But do not cut down on exercise time.)
- b. Make a schedule using your agenda and calendar. Break your task into smaller tasks and establish time limits. Aim to finish the task early.
- c. Resist requests to socialize during planned work time. (Try to say “no” five times a week or every second time you are asked.)
- d. Schedule times to work with a fellow group member. Being responsible to another human being is a great motivator. Remember, though, that your goal is work, not socializing. Take only planned, timed breaks.
- e. Make a written pact with your group wherein non-performance of an assigned and accepted task results in some mutually acceptable punishment that you would nevertheless wish to avoid. Completed tasks could also be rewarded.

### **4. If your goal/task is unclear:**

- a. Do not leave a group meeting without being clear on exactly what is expected of you. Write it down.
- b. Immediately write down the steps needed to complete your task. Ask for ideas from the group (What should be included? How long should it be? Should it involve diagrams, illustrations, models, etc.? Where should I go for research? Who should I talk to?).
- c. Make sure that your goal is realistic and attainable. Narrow any nebulous, unclear goals to concrete tasks. Try to visualize your steps and finished product while within the group setting. Write these things down.

**5. If your task becomes too large/unattainable:**

- a. Go back to your original written task and make sure you have kept within it. (Maybe someone else in your group would appreciate any extra research material you have found.)
- b. Consult with your group leader or your entire group to narrow the focus of your goal/task. Maybe someone within the group can share your work, but don't look to off-load work because of a lack of commitment on your part. (Using e-mail would allow you to show your material to others immediately.)

Note: You must have a large body of work already in evidence to make (b) a reasonable option.

**6. If your research indicates that you are on the wrong track:**

- a. Consult with your group/group leader to change your goal/task to what your research indicates you should be doing.

Note: It is important to communicate with your group/group leader outside of group meetings to maintain consistency within the project. Maybe you could arrange to speak with your group leader at scheduled intervals to update on progress and direction ( in person, by phone or by e-mail).

**7. If you are assigned to be recorder/secretary of a meeting:**

- a. Bring writing utensils and note paper.
- b. Write down important points and assigned tasks decided upon during the meeting.
- c. Halt proceedings and ask members to restate or rephrase if you are having trouble keeping up or understanding.
- d. Take a study skills course or consult your school's resource department to learn how to take notes. (Note: This would be useful in any case.)
- e. Audio/video tape the meeting to transcribe important information at a later date.

**8. If you have volunteered to host a meeting:**

- a. Choose a location with minimal distractions and interruptions. If your phone is always ringing or you cannot resist the refrigerator, hold meetings in a location away from these distractions. Doing so keeps people focussed on the conversation instead of other activities.
- b. Make sure there are enough chairs and table space for people to work comfortably.

## TIME USE SURVEY

| Statement   | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. I am aware of how I use my time.   |     |    |
| 2. I am very satisfied with the way I use my time out of class.             |     |    |
| 3. I make good use of my time.  |     |    |
| 4. I am in control of my time.  |     |    |
| 5. I feel good about what I have accomplished at the end of the day.        |     |    |
| 6. I am willing to make a sacrifice to accomplish a more important task.    |     |    |
| 7. I seldom waste time.   |     |    |
| 8. I schedule my important tasks.   |     |    |
| 9. I start important tasks immediately.                                     |     |    |
| 10. I stick to my schedule.   |     |    |
| 11. I list what I need to accomplish at the start of every day.             |     |    |
| 12. I usually accomplish what I expect to accomplish every day.             |     |    |
| 13. I always meet deadlines.  |     |    |
| 14. Deadlines improve my time use.  |     |    |
| 15. I set short term and long term goals.                                   |     |    |
| 16. I give important goals/tasks extra time.                                |     |    |
| 17. I often say “no” to unimportant activities.                             |     |    |
| 18. I do not leave tasks until the last minute.                             |     |    |
| 19. When I find myself procrastinating or wasting time, I get back on task. |     |    |
| 20. I think positively and enjoy completing tasks.                          |     |    |
| <b>TOTALS:</b>  |     |    |

**SCORING:**

If you answered “Yes”:

16-20 times  
15 times or less

You use your time well. You don’t need help in this area.  
Use this survey to change your practices on time use.

## **Section 2: Contributing**

If you get a “Not Yet” in an evaluation because you have a problem contributing in group activities, you need to improve in this area. Try to videotape your participation in the group. The videotape will clearly point out the exact problem. This section gives possible reasons for your lack of participation and suggestions that may help you to overcome these difficulties.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

**You take an active part, contributing information and ideas.**

**You seek information.**

**You support your opinions with facts.**

One of the major reasons for passivity in a group project or discussion is a lack of knowledge of the topic. Before you attend the next group meeting, make certain that you know what will be discussed and what your responsibilities will be.

### ***Strategies***

You can improve your involvement by considering the five options given below.

#### **1. Library Research**

If you are having difficulty, ask a librarian or a well-informed peer to give you a refresher course on library skills. Library research can include the public library and university libraries in addition to your school library.

Use Technology:

- a. CD-ROMs
- b. modem access
- c. video disks
- d. the Internet

## **2. Clarify Your Responsibilities**

Discuss your responsibilities with other members of the group at the meeting's end in order to clarify your personal tasks and responsibilities. If you are uncertain, ask. You may consider restating to the group what will be discussed at the next meeting.

## **3. Interviews**

Consider seeking out professionals who may help you gather facts for the next meeting. For example, if you are researching cruelty to animals, consider interviewing such individuals as veterinarians or humane society officials. Use technology as an alternative to "live" interviews. Get on line with an expert, surf the Net or find up-to-date interviews published in magazines via CD-ROM programs (TOM Index or Info-Tech).

## **4. Documentation**

Go to the meetings with documentation, *not* unsubstantiated opinions. Provide documentation from reputable texts. Include complete references for your sources (author, dates, quotes, etc.). You may even provide photocopies to be distributed to members of the group. Having such material on hand will give you confidence.

## **5. Rehearse**

Feeling comfortable in discussions does not mean you blurt out whatever comes to mind. First you must listen carefully to everything that is being said. Good listening will lead to insightful responses. Once you have a good idea, say the idea to yourself to "hear" how it sounds. You may do this several times to see whether it continues to make sense. If your ideas are good, then you must choose your moment. Try to wait for lulls in the discussion, and signal that you have something to say by sitting alertly and by engaging the discussion leader and other participants in eye contact.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

**You build on others' ideas.**

**You take an active part, contributing information and ideas.**

Lacking self-confidence during a group activity can be caused by a number of factors, all of which result in reduced group participation. Two possible reasons for low self-confidence are given below along with some suggestions for raising your confidence level.

### ***Problems and Strategies***

#### **1. Personality**

If you are by nature an introvert, you should force yourself to prepare three to five statements for your next group meeting. They should be factual statements, not opinions, because the credibility of factual statements will not be challenged. Attempt to contribute such statements as soon as that item is on the agenda. Don't let anyone steal your thunder. If you are afraid to make a statement, how about asking questions? This will stimulate group response and force you into action. You should be a good listener--write down questions and address them to the speaker for clarification. Asking questions is a good way of contributing.

#### **2. Speaking Skills**

If you get uptight about speaking in front of a group, you should do something about it. The problem will follow you into later life. Sales people, investment brokers, business managers of all types, teachers, and many others need to speak to groups. In fact, a person's chance to advance in his or her career may hinge on this ability.

Many schools offer courses and other opportunities (such as Toastmasters, leadership courses, or clubs) to students who feel uncomfortable speaking in group settings. There are programs like the Dale Carnegie courses available outside of school. These programs specialize in creating a congenial environment in which you can engage in brief, non-threatening exercises.

Use Technology to help you improve your speaking skills.

- a. Consider using a tape recorder to play back your speech or presentation.
- b. Videotape your speech or presentation. This will show you your body language as well as your speech's content.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

**You do your fair share.**

**You stay on topic.**

**You seek information.**

**You do work outside of the meeting times if necessary.**

When you, as a group member, do not fulfill your responsibilities, it is not just you who fails. You can cause the failure of others. In group work, each individual has a responsibility to *not* disappoint the group. This is a team effort and the product of the group's efforts will only be as good as the weakest link.

### ***Problem: Procrastination***

Procrastination can prevent you from fulfilling your responsibilities to the group. The three reasons for procrastination are given below.

- a. *School requires a lot of self-motivation--no one is looking over your shoulder to make sure you get the work done. After high school, even more responsibilities will be placed on you, and it will therefore be tempting to procrastinate.*
- b. *So much of school work is unstructured. You may not know how to proceed.*
- c. *Researching information is sometimes very difficult.*

### ***Strategies to Deal with Procrastination***

There are nine skills that you can use to overcome procrastination.

#### **1. Attack the Pile Daily**

Set aside time for studying each day so that your work does not pile up. One of the worst things a student can do is let the work pile up. The bigger the pile, the harder it is to make a dent in it. Allocate time

for study on a regular basis. Use a calendar and write down the time you plan to devote to studying. Put the calendar in a location where you can see it readily and be reminded of your study goals. The amount of time you spend is less important than the scheduling of regular, daily study periods.

## **2. Use Technology**

Work daily on a computer. This will make it easy for you to find your work, add to it, alter it, and share it with others. If you are one of the many people who consider computers “fun,” make a daily “date” with your computer. You will be surprised by how much this will reduce the amount of procrastinating you do.

## **3. Don’t Let a Paper Cross Your Desk Twice**

This principle is widely applied in business and industry. Executives are trained never to let a piece of paper cross their desks twice. This practice makes sense when you realize that people waste time if they read a letter, put it aside and then later on find themselves having to reread it. Get on a task immediately. You may discover that you have to do preliminary work before you can take on the main task—and this is certainly good to know ahead of time! Remember, procrastination breeds inefficiency.

The practice of taking immediate action on a newly-assigned task is easily applied to school study. Suppose you are asked near the start of the term to write a paper that will be due at the end of the term. The choice of topic is up to you. Your first response might be, “Well, it’s early yet. I have a few weeks before I have to worry about this particular project.” A better response might be, “The first thing I need to do is decide on a topic. I’ll take a few minutes now and get out a sheet of paper and start listing possible ideas for a topic. Then every few days I’ll review my list, scratch out topics I no longer wish to consider, and add new topics.” This second response follows the principle of taking immediate action, even if the action is minimal. In this way you avoid delaying to the point that the term paper becomes a thorn in your side.

## **4. Maintain Continuity of Study**

Once you start to study something, you should not leave it for long periods of time. If you do, you will find that you almost have to start

from the beginning the second time. Leaving your studies unattended for several days leaves you cold. The solution to this situation is to work at it regularly. Establish a time line to complete each part of the project. Allocate a certain amount of time each day. If you must leave a project for several days, make yourself a reminder note about where you are.

## **5. Reduce a Major Task**

If you have a large task assigned by the group, you should break it into smaller, manageable tasks. Make the smaller tasks small enough so that they can be completed within one or two days. Set goals for each small task too. That is, assign a time line to complete each of the small tasks.

## **6. Don't Be Too Hard on Yourself**

Set reasonable standards for your initial efforts on an assignment. If you are to make a presentation to the group, begin by making rough notes. Just get your thoughts in sync without worrying about quality. Then talk naturally from your notes into a tape recorder. This will give you a good start on the project. As you listen to your recording, you can fill out your notes and decide whether you need to research the topic further. At this point, you can begin thinking about required standards and rules. You may repeat the above procedure several times, polishing your project until you have produced quality work.

## **7. Get Help**

Tough assignments may require you to seek the help of a teacher, classmate or tutor. If you are stuck on your group task, there is a danger that you will use this as a reason to procrastinate. A better, more mature tactic is to get help. Sometimes all you may need is clarification or direction. A good source may be the librarian, who may have access to information that would help get you started. Ask questions to your group members or teacher and don't be afraid to admit that you are at an impasse. If you don't do something about your difficulty, it can be demoralizing and even worse--it can lead to failure.

## **8. Recognize Your Peak Energy Output**

Every individual has certain times when he/she is more energetic and mentally willing to complete a task. Recognize your peak periods and use that time to complete your group responsibilities. When you reach a point of fatigue, you should direct your efforts to a less strenuous activity, such as sorting out information. Take a study break by leaving your material for a short time. Remember, schedule your periods of study when your energy levels are high.

## **9. Be Organized**

Keep your study materials accessible and organized. If your study area gets to be a mess, you will tend to avoid it. Take time at the beginning or end of each study session to reorganize. It is important to realize that organizing your study area will reduce procrastination. You can take other steps to maintain the accessibility of your study material too. A large desk with several drawers or shelves in which to stack different materials would be helpful. Keep materials out of the way but visible to you when you need them. Put loose papers in files that are labelled. Take the files and create an index. This will allow you to access the papers you required easily. You could use colour codes for different papers on the same topic.

If you are reluctant or unable to shuffle paper, use a computer. You can easily store, access material and organize it into sections. This avoids confusion.

### **Section 3: Working Co-Operatively**

If you have received a “Not Yet” in the Working Co-Operatively Section of an evaluation, you can use this portion of the learner guide to help you develop this skill.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

**You help the group accomplish its objectives.**

**You act as the harmonizer if necessary.**

**You listen carefully to every group member.**

**You encourage the other group members.**

**You maintain a positive approach.**

#### ***Strategies to Help the Group Accomplish its Objectives***

1. Be polite.
2. Try to remember that you function as part of the group so if the group does not succeed, neither do you.
3. Reread the assignment to the group to make sure all parts are covered within the group.
4. Be willing to do more than your “fair share” to help the entire group. See the organizational checklists on pages 30 and 31.
5. Initiate a progress report to assess and redistribute tasks if problems have cropped up. You might say, “To begin this meeting, could we each report on how we are doing and how close we are to finishing our part of the assignment?”
6. Make sure you understand what was said by paraphrasing and/or asking questions to clarify. Example: A group member states, “It is interesting that writers are introverts.” You might then ask, “Do you mean that all writers are introverts or just fiction writers?”
7. After a group meeting, fill out the Post Meeting Reaction Questionnaire given below.

## Post Meeting Reaction Questionnaire

1. On the whole, I thought this meeting was: (circle one)

Very Poor      Poor      Fair      Mediocre      Good      Very Good      Excellent

2. The strengths of the meeting were:

3. The weaknesses of the meeting were:

4. This meeting would have been better if we had:

5. At our next meeting, I would like to see us:

\*\*\*\*\*

Discuss your reactions with another group member and choose one goal to improve your behaviour. At the next meeting, ask your teacher or another group member to give you feedback on your performance.

8. The **maintenance functions** of a group focus on how the group pursues its task. These functions involve feelings, moods, attitudes, needs, and the growth of individual members and of the group as a whole. Effective group members attempt to demonstrate some or all of the maintenance functions at each meeting. Set a goal for yourself to perform one of the seven maintenance functions at the next group meeting. As you get more proficient at group work, you may be able to take on additional roles or ask each of the group members to assume one of the roles at each meeting.

### **Maintenance Function 1: Gatekeeping**

Gatekeeping is the function of keeping the group “door” open for the more timid, less talkative members to contribute if and when they wish. This function may be carried out by the leader or any member who is sensitive to others’ needs.

### **Maintenance Function 2: Encouraging**

Frequently members need encouragement to participate in the meeting. Often an individual feels uncertain about the value of his/her contribution and presents a hesitant, poorly expressed idea that is passed over by the more dominant members of the group. If the Encourager notices that the group member’s hesitation—and not the quality of the idea--results in the point being ignored, he/she can give encouragement in a number of ways. The Encourager could ask for elaboration, restate the idea so that it is clear (with due credit to the originator), or add to the idea.

### **Maintenance Function 3: Harmonizing**

Frequently conflicts may break out in a group over an issue, a plan for proceeding, or an interpersonal difficulty. Those members who enjoy fighting quickly take sides, polarizing the group. Those who have difficulty with fighting withdraw while the battle rages on around them. They are loathe to enter the fray even to try to stop it.

The harmonizing function may be helpful in a conflict situation. The individual who performs this function seeks to find some common ground that both sides can accept, perhaps by locating a solution to the problem that is agreeable to all or by reminding the combatants of what is happening to the group--polarization with half the group on the sidelines. Members may then recognize that

trying to solve a conflict by fighting is not a helpful approach to conflict resolution. Harmonizing should not be confused with attempts to bury or deny conflict. Conflict in a meeting is inevitable; resolving it constructively is a challenge. Harmonizing is negotiation between opposing sides in which one member serves as a third-party peacemaker, trying to retrieve the best ideas from both sides. When overdone, however, harmonizing dulls the flash of creativity that confrontation can produce.

#### **Maintenance Function 4: Consensus Seeking**

Often during meetings, issues become polarized with neither side budging and a win/lose situation develops. Consensus seeking is the maintenance function that can resolve the polarization.

In a win/lose situation, a group becomes locked into an either/or way of thinking, believing that one party must win and the other faction must lose. This competitive situation quickly deteriorates into a lose/lose conclusion: Those members who lose the argument can sabotage the winning decision by passively refusing to cooperate, by “forgetting” to implement the decision, or by storing up resentment to be used in future conflicts. The “winners” win the battle, but the “losers” triumph in the end. When competition and rivalry become intense, everyone loses.

Consensus means that every group member has an opportunity to influence the final decision. Group members reach substantial agreement, although not necessarily unanimity. It is important to note that consensus cannot be achieved by majority rule, “horse-trading,” or averaging. Consensus frees the group from either/or thinking and emphasizes the possibilities of both/and thinking by focussing attention on needs and goals. In consensus seeking, it is possible to achieve a solution that all members can regard as fair. When members strive for what is best for all, rather than try to triumph over opponents, they fulfill the highest expectations of the democratic tradition.

#### **Maintenance Function 5: Giving And Receiving Feedback**

Feedback is a report of the impact a given behaviour has on an individual member. It frequently takes the form of “When you said....., I felt .....,” providing a check on whether the message received is in fact the message sent. Giving and receiving feedback

is a maintenance function that provides a group with information about its progress.

Feedback is most useful when it is solicited, either by the leader or by individual members. Statements like “I’d like to know your reaction to the problem-solving strategy we used this evening” or “I’d appreciate comments about the way I managed the time today. Did you feel rushed?” are invitations for members to critique the way things are done. The procedure allows comments on methods, rather than personalities.

Feedback is more effective when it is direct, specific, descriptive, immediate, and shared with the whole group. Giving and receiving feedback is a skill that can be applied in most interpersonal situations.

### **Maintenance Function 6: Setting Standards**

The setting of standards is needed for both task performance and group maintenance. Occasionally the group needs to be reminded of its commitment to efficiency, fairness and open communication. The person fulfilling this function can urge the members to deal with intra-group or interpersonal conflicts instead of attempting to ignore their presence. The Standard Setter can remind the members of the need for their trusting and caring for one another.

Periodically, the members may wish to discuss the norms or standards that are developing as the group matures. If the leader is sensitive to both the task and maintenance, then a standard that has emerged implicitly can be made explicit for future work.

### **Maintenance Function 7: Processing**

The final 10 minutes of a meeting can sometimes be reserved for a quick review or processing of how the meeting progressed. Individuals may volunteer to serve as observers during the session and then report their perceptions. This review can alert the group to its chronic problems (“We spent 40 minutes discussing the budget, although only 10 minutes had been allotted for it.”) and to its achievements (“For the fourth straight week, we ended on time.”). As members become sensitive to this maintenance function, all can participate in the review.

If face-to-face verbal evaluation and feedback is too difficult in the early developmental stages of the group, members can fill out simple forms rating the meeting and indicating what might have been done either by the leader or the other members to make the meeting more effective. These forms need not be signed, but can be read aloud either at the end of the meeting for discussion or at the beginning of the next meeting.

## Organizational Checklist for a Multi-Session Group Project

| DUE | DONE |   |
|-----|------|---|
|     |      | <b>1. Planning</b>  |
|     |      | <b>a) Clarify task</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Exactly what should the “product” be?</li> <li>◆ How long must it be?</li> </ul>  |
|     |      | <b>b) Define group roles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Who will be the leader, recorder, monitor, reporter?</li> </ul>   |
|     |      | <b>c) Define group goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Why are you doing this?</li> <li>◆ What do you want people to know or understand or remember after you have presented?</li> </ul>   |
|     |      | <b>d) Create a list of subtasks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Should/Can you divide the project into chunks?</li> </ul>  |
|     |      | <b>e) Assign tasks to members</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Are the workloads even?</li> </ul>   |
|     |      | <b>f) Create a timeline and deadlines (Plan to be early.)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Will this leave you “grace time” for troubleshooting?</li> </ul>   |
|     |      | <b>g) Gather information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Where should you go? / Who should you ask?</li> </ul>   |
|     |      | <b>2. Discussing</b>  |
|     |      | <b>a) Share information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Have all the major points been covered?</li> <li>◆ Do you have enough info or too much info on each subtopic?</li> </ul>   |
|     |      | <b>h) Flesh out the “thin” areas or cut out irrelevancies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Do you need to do further research?</li> </ul>   |
|     |      | <b>3. Writing</b>   |
|     |      | <b>a) Outline</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Will every major point be covered?</li> <li>◆ How will everything be arranged? (Chronological, compare/contrast, problem/solution, ideal/reality, advantages/disadvantages, old way/new way?)</li> <li>◆ How can the opening be made engaging?</li> <li>◆ How can the closing be made strong and memorable?</li> </ul> |
|     |      | <b>b) Polish</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Can the product be embellished or “jazzed up” in any way? (Visuals, role playing, question period, game?)</li> </ul>  |
|     |      | <b>4. Presenting/Handing In</b>   |
|     |      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Are you ready <u>before</u> the actual deadline, which is _____?<br/>(insert date)</li> </ul>  |

## Organizational Checklist for a Single-Session Group Project

Time allowed = \_\_\_\_\_ minutes

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>DONE</b>     |  |
|                 | <b><i>1. Planning</i></b>  |
|                 | <b>a) Clarify task</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Exactly what should the “product” be?</li> <li>◆ How long must it be?</li> <li>◆ Exactly how much time do you have?</li> </ul>   |
|                 | <b>b) Define roles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Who will be recorder, monitor, leader, reporter?</li> </ul>  |
|                 | <b>c) Define group goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ What are you to accomplish?</li> <li>◆ What do you want people to know or understand or remember after you have presented?</li> </ul>  |
| (May not apply) | <b>d) Create a list of subtasks and assign</b>   |
|                 | <b>e) Gather information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Is there a text to consult?</li> </ul>   |
|                 | <b><i>2. Discussing</i></b>  |
|                 | <b>a) Share information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Have all the major points been covered?</li> <li>◆ Do you have enough info or too much info on each subtask?</li> </ul>   |
|                 | <b>b) Flesh out the “thin” areas or cut out irrelevancies</b>  |
|                 | <b><i>3. Writing</i></b>   |
|                 | <b>a) Outline</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Will every major point be covered?</li> <li>◆ How will everything be arranged?</li> <li>◆ How can the opening be made engaging?</li> <li>◆ How can the closing be made strong and memorable?</li> </ul> |
|                 | <b>b) Polish</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Is there time to embellish the “product” in any way? (Visuals, role playing, question period, game?)</li> </ul>  |
|                 | <b><i>4. Presenting/ Handing In</i></b>  |
|                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Are you ready <u>before</u> the time limit?</li> </ul>  |

## *Strategies to Assume the Role of Harmonizer if Necessary*

1. Be polite.
2. Do not criticize ideas unless you can do it positively, without making it a personal attack on another group member, and make a constructive suggestion to go with it. Focus feedback on the behaviour rather than on the person. Examples:  
The WRONG way: “You are a loudmouth and don’t care about anyone else.”  
A BETTER way: “That is the third time you have interrupted me today.”
3. Phrase criticisms in the form of a question. For example: “Do you think we would have time to do what you have suggested?” not “We can’t finish if we do it that way.”
4. Never give feedback by “dumping” on a group member. The purpose of giving feedback is to give information that will be helpful to the person or may improve your relationship with him or her. Verify your feedback by asking the person to rephrase what you said to see if what they heard was what you meant. Here are some examples of inappropriate feedback along with better alternatives.

### **What You Said . . .**

1. As if we can really pull off *that* idea!
2. That’s the dumbest idea I’ve ever heard!
3. You’re *wrong!*
1. You’ve got to get that typed by Monday *or else!*
1. Shut up and get to work!
1. Wow, we’re *doomed!*

### **What You *Should* Have Said . . .**

1. That’s a really creative idea, but I don’t think we’ll have enough time to do it justice.
1. You know, I’m not sure there is any evidence in the novel to support your point.
1. Do you have any proof to back that up?
2. Do you think you could get that done by Monday?
3. Pardon the interruption, but if you’re finished, could you help me with my part?
1. I’m worried about getting finished on time. Maybe we should rethink our timeline.

5. Some group members may deliberately cause conflict in order to get support for a point of view. Honest disagreements are a creative force in working out problems. But conflict based on control, contempt, or hatefulness creates chaos. Try to become aware of people who may be trying to do this. Try to defuse their actions by making sure the group stays focussed on the goal, not personalities.
6. Reflect back to others what you hear them saying about both facts and feelings. This lets them know you are listening and helps you to clarify everyone's understanding.

### ***Strategies to Help You Listen Carefully When Others Speak and Hear Them Out***

1. Be polite.
2. *Really listen* to other group members. Let each speaker finish. If you need to, write down questions or comments while the person is talking, but let him/her finish.
3. If you are the type of person who anticipates what others are going to say and wants to finish their sentences for them, practice waiting until there is silence before you speak. Hold back and let the speaker continue, and hold back a second time before jumping in. Exercise emotional control while you listen.
4. If you find you are the only one talking, ask yourself if you have talked too long. Make your point and then stop talking. Let someone else speak. Use a check list to record each person's contribution. Beware if your checkmarks outnumber everyone else's.
5. Make eye contact with the speaker, and try to create a mental picture of what you hear instead of anticipating what he or she will say. Tune in to what he or she is saying, not on what you are planning to say next.
6. Keep the focus on the speaker until he/she is finished. Avoid jumping in with your own story until he/she has completely finished.
7. Don't let your eyes roam . . . even if a flying saucer enters the room and little green men get out. Stay focussed on the speaker.

8. Fatigue can interfere with concentration. Check your diet and the amount of sleep and exercise you are getting.
9. Being a good listener means being an active listener. Follow these steps to be an active listener.
  - Remind yourself of what has already been said while you listen.
  - Ask yourself how the speaker's comments fit the big picture.
  - Listen "between the lines." Is the speaker hinting at something?
  - Don't evaluate what you're hearing until you've heard all that the person is trying to say.
  - Take notes to remember--but first ask yourself if you really need to remember what you are taking notes on. Be selective.
1. If listening to other group members is a team problem, you could suggest the following exercise.

Anyone may begin the discussion. The second person to speak must first summarize what the first person said. Person 2 must then check with Person 1 that he/she summarized correctly, and if so, Person 2 may then add his/her point of view or information. When Person 2 finishes, Person 3 must begin by summarizing what Person 2 said and so on. If a person cannot repeat what was said before, he or she is not permitted to offer a point of view. If you have trouble with this exercise, add a videotaping of the session to examine what is happening.

2. Identify your listening style using the examples below. Set yourself a goal to practice at least one of the effective listening behaviours at the next group meeting.

## **Ineffective Listening Behaviors**

### **1: The Uninterested Listener**

Uninterested listeners are not interested in the speaker or the topic because they are preoccupied with another topic, bored, or have some objection to the speaker's style, voice, or message. This type of listener makes communication almost impossible.

### **2: The Argumentative Listener**

Argumentative listeners don't pay much attention to the speaker because they are so busy formulating their own opinions and what they are going to say when they have the chance to speak. This type of listener focusses more on internal dialogue and may interrupt the speaker to get heard. Communication is sabotaged because the sending and receiving process has been interrupted.

### **3: The Defeated Listener**

Defeated listeners make the assumption that they are not capable of understanding what is being said and therefore the speaker is not given a fair chance to get the message across. Sometimes it is the speaker who causes this mind set by using complex or technical language instead of adapting his or her message to the listener's level.

### **4: The Paper and Pencil Listener**

Paper and pencil listeners concentrate more on getting notes down on paper than receiving the message. Since people talk more quickly than most people can write, information is lost.

### **5: The Judgmental Listener**

Judgmental listeners pay close attention to the message. If used properly, judgmental listening helps the listener assess the quality of the message. However, this can become ineffective if the listener ignores information that agrees with his or her point of view and focusses only on faults within the message.

## **Effective Listening Behaviours**

### **1. Analyze your habits.**

Pay attention to how you listen. Do you make eye contact with the speaker or does your attention wander? What does your body language tell you? Do you try to do other tasks while listening?

### **2. Analyze your attitudes.**

Have you made up your mind before hearing another point of view? Do you let a speaker's appearance influence your opinion of his or her ideas? Are you discourteous to some people?

### **3. Be prepared to listen.**

Reading any assigned material before entering into a meeting or class will give you the opportunity to prepare. This will help communication and allow you to analyze more effectively.

### **4. Select a good setting.**

You may not have control over where meetings or classes take place, but you can position yourself where you can get the most benefit. If there are distractions, try to eliminate them. For example, turn off the television, close the door, or move to a different location.

### **5. Focus on the speaker.**

Make a conscious effort to listen. Maintain eye contact. Pay attention to non-verbal communication. Give feedback to the speaker by nodding in agreement, or looking puzzled if you don't understand. Try to anticipate what the speaker will say, and then listen critically. Think about what you are hearing. When the speaker has finished, actively summarize what the speaker said. What were the main points, the key ideas?

## **6. Be patient when listening.**

You may miss important points if you let an ineffective speaker turn you off. Don't let the speaker's appearance, speech pattern or style distract you from the message.

## **7. Avoid becoming distracted by the content of the message.**

If the speaker shocks you or provides information that is disagreeable, don't dwell on that point. You may miss the big picture. Make note of your concern, and plan to question the speaker after he or she finishes.

## **8. Try to detect the organization of the message.**

You will be able to follow the speaker and process the information more easily if you can decipher the organization of the information. Organizational methods can include a series of subtopics, dates, problems and solutions, causes and effects, advantages and disadvantages, or a combination of these.

## **9. Summarize what you heard.**

Summarizing immediately after a presentation or discussion will help you remember the key points and identify any shortcomings in the content. This process will help you to identify a need for more information and give you the opportunity to question the speaker while he or she is still available.

## ***Strategies to Encourage Others***

1. Be polite.
2. Encourage all group member to participate. If certain group members dominate the discussion, try saying, "Thank you for sharing with us. Now let's hear what some of the other group members would like to add."
3. Avoid being the answer source. Encourage group members to interact with each other. Ask, "What do the rest of you think?" and try to get quiet members to contribute by asking them directly for their opinions.

4. Initiate a “token exercise.” Each group member gets a certain number of tokens and must use them to speak. No tokens--no speaking. Quiet members have no choice but to use their tokens since tokens have to be used up during the meeting. Outspoken members must learn to contribute judiciously.
5. Initiate a feedback system whereby all group members must record and hand in one sentence describing what they learned or what happened in the group meeting.

### ***Strategies to Have a Positive Approach***

1. Be polite.
2. Set a goal of making at least one positive comment to each group member each meeting.
3. If you have trouble being positive, ask your teacher or another group member to monitor you during a group meeting. Whenever you exhibit behaviour that is not positive, he/she will give you a signal such as pulling his/her ear.
4. Pay someone a compliment at every group meeting. You might catch a group member immediately after a meeting and say, “I think the way you presented your side of the issue was thorough and effective. You really made me understand.”
5. Make sure you know each group member’s name. Not only does this help you to communicate, but people like to hear their names spoken.
6. If you feel you must complain about another group member, try to explain to the person what is bothering you and how it makes you feel. Suggest what can be done about it, listen to his or her point of view, don’t get sidetracked into an argument about other issues, and always end the discussion on a friendly note. Give the person a chance to explain his/her behaviour and make a positive suggestion as to how he/she might communicate without offending anyone.

For more information on the topics covered in this section, initiate a search on the Internet for such topics as group dynamics, communication, listening, feedback, and positive attitude.