

# 5 PILLARS

## of COLLABORATIVE WORK in the CLASSROOM Setting

When developing collaborative activities in your large classroom, following certain principles can enhance success. In this document, we will explain the five pillars of effective group work and provide examples.

According to Jones and Jones (2008), there are five pillars that make collaboration work for student groups. Applying these principles are especially important in large classroom where peer engagement is a key component in fostering understanding and learning. The pillars are:

### 1 PROMOTIVE INTERDEPENDENCE

When designing group work it should be such that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible for it to be completed successfully without all students contributing. To develop this dynamic, you might:

- Organize the group such that each member is responsible for specific knowledge that no other student in the group has.
- Assign each student with a specific role they are to fill throughout the project.

### 2 INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Students must understand and accept that they are responsible for making a significant contribution to the final product. To encourage this, you might:

- Cold call on a group member to report out on the team's progress.
- Give individual quizzes or assignments in addition to the group quizzes or assignments.
- Create a peer feedback mechanism where students are required to anonymously share what each student is contributing, what is not being contributed, and how each might be a better group member.

### 3

## PROMOTIVE, FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION

For group success, students need to understand the expectations they have for one another. To achieve this:

- Create time and space for students to talk about how they need to interact as a group to be successful. Encourage them to set agreements for the group. Allow them to make use of these agreements when providing feedback to one another.

### 4

## SOCIAL SKILLS

It is vital that students develop the appropriate interpersonal skills necessary for cooperative learning to work. To do this, the instructor may:

- Set the expectations regarding interpersonal interactions such as turn-taking or disagreeing well.
- Model the desired engagement and provide students with ample time to practice this while in the instructor's presence.

### 5

## PROCESSING: INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

Student learning occurs during times of reflection and meaning making. As instructors, it is important to intentionally create such opportunities. Some approaches are:

- Give students prompts asking them what they are learning, what they are still unsure about, and how their team helped them to learn something. Have them respond anonymously and then collect the results. Read back what has been written and have the students discuss it.

*For more resources on engaging students in large classroom or other active learning strategies, please refer to the teaching resources section of our website. If you are in need of more one-on-one support, please schedule a consultation with a member of our staff via our website at [teaching.utk.edu](http://teaching.utk.edu).*

## REFERENCE

Jones, K. A., & Jones, J. L. (2008). Making Cooperative Learning Work in the College Classroom: An Application of the "Five Pillars" of Cooperative Learning to Post Secondary Instruction. *Journal of effective teaching*, 8(2), 61-76.