To develop group skills, students need to do more than just complete group tasks. Along the way, it's important that they reflect on group processes. Reflection can be informal or formal (built into assessment). Students can reflect individually or in groups.

Students can reflect on both the processes and products of group work. When incorporating reflective activities into group work, it is important that students have the opportunity to apply what they have learnt through their reflections to future tasks to improve their learning. This section outlines a number of ways to build reflection into group tasks and projects.

**Helping students monitor their development and reflect on their performance**

**Reflective activities**

To develop effective group skills, students need to practise using their skills and reflect on what worked and did not work. This helps them form generalised principles based on their experience, which then inform their future actions.

You can use one or more of the following strategies to help your students reflect on their group work skills. Depending on the nature of your group task or project, you might include a reflective activity during the task or at its completion. For example, at the end of the group task, students could submit a collaborative reflective report on group processes, or they could reflect on how to in the future by completing the student exercise: **Planning ahead—What can I do better next time?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflective activity</th>
<th>What is involved in this activity?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Checklists</strong></td>
<td>Checklists help students reflect on their group's preparation and performance of tasks. For example, students (individually or as a group) can complete checklists to help them reflect on their <strong>group contributions</strong>, <strong>performance in group presentations</strong>; or the process of compiling a group-written report. You can use checklists to ensure that students create time for reflection in meetings, so that they come to understand that reflection is integral to group work, and factor it into their future meetings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students keep a learning journal to track the development of their group skills. For example, after each task or key stage of a project, they reflect in the journal on the things their group is doing well or not so well, and consider what they could do to improve in later stages of the task/project. Learning journals are also an effective way for you to monitor group activity and processes, particularly the relative contributions of group members.

Encouraging students to give each other regular constructive feedback in group meetings helps them practise integrating reflective practices. In peer review, students reflect on their own and others' performance of group tasks. Reviewing what peers (strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement) builds students' understanding of the principles of effective group processes and behaviour.

You can ask students, once they have reflected on their group’s performance, to share their reflections with the rest of the class: the aspects that they found rewarding or challenging about the experience, and how they think they could improve next time.

Provide opportunities for students to practise articulating aspects of their skills development. Employers expect students to understand what is meant by effective group skills and to articulate their experiences.

You can ask students to indicate action they have taken in response to feedback given to them by you or by peers, to improve their performance in groups.

Students complete and submit a report on group processes to help them reflect on various group processes: how they know each other as a group, how they organised group meetings, how they allocated tasks, what processes they used in a group presentation etc. See the student handout *Steps in writing a collaborative report on group processes*.

This paper can be extended to deal with individual performance, e.g. What were the best aspects of my performance? What was the worst? What did I learn from listening to my peers’ presentations? How can I improve my performance next time? For more information, see *Assessing Group Work*.

Student portfolios can help students keep track of the development of their group work and other skills, and provide a powerful reflective tool.

| Learning journals | Students keep a learning journal to track the development of their group skills. For example, after each task or key stage of a project, they reflect in the journal on the things their group is doing well or not so well, and consider what they could do to improve in later stages of the task/project. Learning journals are also an effective way for you to monitor group activity and processes, particularly the relative contributions of group members. |
| Peer review | Encouraging students to give each other regular constructive feedback in group meetings helps them practise integrating reflective practices. In peer review, students reflect on their own and others' performance of group tasks. Reviewing what peers (strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement) builds students' understanding of the principles of effective group processes and behaviour. |
| Class discussion | You can ask students, once they have reflected on their group’s performance, to share their reflections with the rest of the class: the aspects that they found rewarding or challenging about the experience, and how they think they could improve next time. |
| Articulation | Provide opportunities for students to practise articulating aspects of their skills development. Employers expect students to understand what is meant by effective group skills and to articulate their experiences. |
| Responding to feedback | You can ask students to indicate action they have taken in response to feedback given to them by you or by peers, to improve their performance in groups. |
| Reflective paper | Students complete and submit a report on group processes to help them reflect on various group processes: how they know each other as a group, how they organised group meetings, how they allocated tasks, what processes they used in a group presentation etc. See the student handout *Steps in writing a collaborative report on group processes*. This paper can be extended to deal with individual performance, e.g. What were the best aspects of my performance? What was the worst? What did I learn from listening to my peers’ presentations? How can I improve my performance next time? For more information, see *Assessing Group Work*. |
| Student portfolio | Student portfolios can help students keep track of the development of their group work and other skills, and provide a powerful reflective tool. |

**Helping students identify how they can improve**

The following exercise helps students to think about their experiences in groups, about the group's functioning and about their individual roles and contributions to the group. Importantly, it also helps students to identify how the group might function more effectively next time. Using the prompts, students can reflect individually, then discuss their responses in groups or as a class.

**Student exercise**

**Planning ahead—What can I do better next time?**
**Last Time**

- What I liked **most** about the group was...
- What I liked **least** about the group was...
- The **most** effective things about the way the groups worked were...
- The **least** effective things about the way the groups worked were...
- The things I did that helped the group **most** were...
- The things I did that helped the group **least** were...

**Next Time**

- The types of people I’d like to work with are...
- The roles I’d like to play in the group are...
- The exercises I’d like the group to go through are...
- The working methods I’d like to use are...
- The way I’d like us to run our meeting is...