

Guidelines for Effective Team Membership

Contribute ideas and solutions

The willingness of all team members to draw on their own expertise and experience to contribute ideas and solutions is what makes an effective team. You should feel comfortable enough in the team setting to express yourself, and know that your ideas have value. Creative input from a variety of member perspectives is the basis of effective problem solving. Team "norms must encourage contributions, not inhibit them."

Recognize and respect differences in others

Creative, effective teams bring together individuals with widely divergent skills and backgrounds who must work closely together to execute the tasks assigned to them. This can only be accomplished in an atmosphere of mutual respect and willingness to listen. You won't always agree with the ideas other team members bring to a discussion, but you should always be willing to listen without prejudice and contribute positively to the problem-solving process.

Value the ideas and contributions of others

A willingness to respect ideas and opinions that differ from your own is the cornerstone of positive and interactive teamwork. Input from every member of the groups should be carefully weighed and evaluated, never disparaged.

Listen and share information

Really listening to what other team members have to say is one of the most vital skills you can contribute to a productive team atmosphere. You should always be willing to give an attentive ear to the views of other team members and expect them to do the same for you.

Ask questions and get clarification

If an idea isn't clear to you, it is your responsibility to the team to ask questions until the matter is clarified. The field of education often has a language all their own; asking questions to cut through the jargon will benefit all participants.

Participate fully and keep your commitments

To fully participate, you have to contribute ideas, challenge conventional ways of doing things, ask questions, and complete the tasks assigned to you in a timely and professional manner. These are your responsibilities. Without the enthusiastic participation of all its members, a group is just a collection of individuals. The unique skills and viewpoints you bring to the team are crucial to the successful completion of tasks.

Source: <http://www.nsba.org/sbot/toolkit/TeamSur.html>