**Guidelines for Effective Group Work**

The guidelines below were put together by our Teaching Assistant, Lisa Kramarchyk, based on input from the Psyc 220 class in October 2003. Before reading them, you might want to consider the distinction between *group process* and *group outcome*. Our Psyc 220 text makes a distinction between process research and outcome research. Clinical psychologists as well as research psychologists make this distinction. Studies of group interaction show that many (perhaps most) group members are*outcome oriented* and focus on the goal the group is attempting to reach. Other group members are *process oriented* attend more to the group interaction process. It is healthy to have group members of each kind. You might want to think about this in your group, and from time to time pause as a group to discuss your group process. Are you satisfied with it? Are there ways it can be improved?

As psychology students, you should think about your group process as well as your group product. One possibility is to take some time in your group and go through the guidelines below.

Guidelines for groups:

**Have respect for each other.**  
- Respect each other’s ideas  
- Respect the other group members  
- Don’t interrupt each other  
- Everyone’s opinion should count  
- Be honest with each other

**All group members should do an equal amount of work.**  
- Everyone should share the responsibility of the tasks  
- Don’t take over and don’t let others take over

**Your group should have a common understanding of goals that need to be achieved.**  
- Help each other to understand all concepts

**Be open to compromise**.  
- Be willing to cooperate with others on their ideas  
- Keep an open mind  
- Vote on disagreements

**Effective communication.**  
- Make sure everyone is able to be vocal about their ideas and problems  
- Give ideas no matter how “off” you may think they are  
- Listen effectively  
- Don’t be critical

**Time management**.  
- Attend and arrive on time to all group meetings  
- Be flexible about meeting times  
- Keep on task (limit talk about non-related events)

**Be happy in the group you are in.**