COOPERATIVE LEARNING: TEAM FORMATION

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Team Formation Criteria

- Form teams of 3-4 students for most tasks

- Teams should be heterogeneous in ability level

- If assignments will involve outside of classroom work, try to find team members that have common blocks of time available

- Don't isolate categories of students that are at risk for dropping out (i.e. underrepresented minorities)

Team Formation Strategies

- <u>3-4 members</u>: 2 members might be lacking of diversity in ideas and approaches. 5+ members might end up with inactive members.

- <u>Academic Heterogeneity</u>: Weak students see how better students approach various problems, and strong students gain a better understanding of the problems.

- <u>Instructor-Assigned Teams</u>: Generating groups of students who can share common blocks of time is obviously a good strategy.

- <u>Inclusion of at-risk students</u>: Students in a particular demographic category are most likely to be at-risk for dropping. Isolating them in a team might force them to adopt passive roles. *Students who belong to this category should be "distributed" to teams with "good" students.*

Obtaining Info for Team Formation

- Complete a questionnaire for instructor review and team formation
  - Interests/hobbies, gender (optional), ethnicity (optional), grades in prerequisite courses, times available for group work

- Use of online software (i.e., Team Maker® developed at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology)
  - Types of questions that can be asked:
    - Multiple choice, choose-any-of, free-form response, schedule

- Students self select groups
  - Stipulate – no group to have >1 student who earned A in 1 or 2 prerequisite courses