Groups-Teams-Tips for Implementation

Teams can be a powerful learning tool, but they need to be facilitated correctly. If teams don't function well, they can be a source of frustration and anxiety for students and instructors. Below are a few suggestions:

✝ **Create small teams**
  - ✩ Assign a small number of students (four or five) to a team to help ensure cohesiveness and the ability to communicate readily.
  - ✩ One option is to assign teams based on the mix of student abilities and/or interests.

✝ **Facilitate a team atmosphere**
  - ✩ Often there is a lack of informal interaction online, so you'll want to create opportunities for students to get to know each other—perhaps with an ice-breaker activity.
  - ✩ Ideally, students will have some knowledge of each other due to participation in an "introductions" discussion site during the first week of the course.

✝ **Provide sufficient time**
  - ✩ Realize that it will take longer for the team to develop cohesion and reach the point of critical thinking due to the asynchronous format.
  - ✩ Build in extra time accordingly for your online team assignment or project.

✝ **Provide detailed, extensive instructions**
  - ✩ Give your students explicit guidelines and specific objectives for their assignment so the level of confusion is minimized.
  - ✩ You might also want to provide specific team role descriptions, depending on the level of your student's experience.

✝ **Set short-term deadlines**
  - ✩ Break a large assignment into many small deadlines (milestones) to allow yourself the ability to check on team progress and keep teams on track.
  - ✩ It's a good idea to require team members to place outlines and drafts in Doc Sharing where you and other team members can review the material.

✝ **Remind students of available tools**
  - ✩ When the teams are created the team designation automatically flows to the Email, Doc Sharing and Chat communication tools.
  - ✩ It's a good idea to set up a Team Project discussion page where teams can organize and continue to carry on a dialog.
  - ✩ Allow students to choose the tools that work best for their needs and styles.

Taken from CS Managers-iSupport Tips.