MBS0215
Academic Writing and Research Skills for Business

Lecture 3: Effective Group/Team Work at University Level
Aims for this session:

1. **Group Work at University Level**
   - Key Requirements
   - Approaches

2. **Types of Group Members**

3. **Being Successful in Groups**
   - Tuckman's Model of Team Development
   - Tips
   - Scenarios
What is team work?

Being able to work **successfully** in a group is an **important skill** for graduates.

Employability covers a broad range of non-academic or softer skills and abilities which are of value in the workplace. **It includes the ability to work in a team; a willingness to demonstrate initiative and original thought; self-discipline in starting and completing tasks to deadline.**

Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
http://www.cbi.org.uk/business-issues/education-and-skills/in-focus/employability/
Group work relies on there being a strong team.

Q: What is a team?

- Individuals working towards a shared task
- Each person brings their own personal identity (age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, etc) to this diverse group
- These individuals will have a common objective. They are likely to share the same line(s) of thought and will exercise their individual skills
- The team dynamic can be applicable in any setting
NASA team
Sports team
Q Can you name 4 key requirements for effective group work?

- Decision making
- Time management
- Communication
- Cooperation
Group work: getting started…

- Set out ground rules
- Discuss what needs to be done
- Distribute roles
- Agree on group deadlines
- Stay in touch
Group work: getting started…

Set out ground rules

• Is it okay to be late for meetings and work sessions?
• Should lack of communication be tolerated?
• What is the best way to deal with lazy team members?

What other rules might you need?
Group work: getting started…

Discuss what needs to be done

• Does everyone understand the assignment?

• If you don’t understand what you are expected to do you’ll have difficulty doing well in the coursework

• Don’t misinterpret what you need to do:

In an art class the lecturer wanted 12 thumbnail sketches (small rough idea of the picture) of the students’ ideas for a painting. One student drew her thumbnail 12 times.
Group work: getting started…

Distribute roles

- Who’s going to undertake which task?
- Match tasks to the strengths of individual group members
- Each person must have a role to play

What are your strengths?
Group work: getting started…

Agree on group deadlines

• Work your way backwards from the presentation date
• Create mini-deadlines for completion of the tasks that need to be done
• Be realistic about meeting the mini-deadlines

What kinds of tasks will you work on?
Group work: getting started…

Stay in touch

• It’s important to stay in contact with group members
• Use social media to keep in touch
• If you become ill, contact your group members as soon as possible
• Save all work in a central place so everyone can access it

What is the best way for you to stay in contact?
**Q:** What are the qualities of a successful team?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equality</th>
<th>Demonstrations of an individual’s knowledge</th>
<th>Confidence to offer input</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Can expand on experiences of a team member</td>
<td>Sharing new perspectives and approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving and receiving feedback</td>
<td>Maintaining communication</td>
<td>Planning and managing work in stages</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q: What are the traits of an unsuccessful team?

- Members may not all get on along with each other
- Failure to listen to each other’s views
- Lack of motivation
- Individuals may dominate the group
- Limited communication
- Failure to set/achieve milestones
- Not make use of the available skills
- Disorganisation
Success in group work requires:

**Listening**
- What is the other person saying?
- Are you listening to their words without bias?

**Speaking**
- How are you speaking to others group members?
- What is your tone like?
Listening and Speaking will help the group to...

**Avoid**
- creating conflicting / unclear messages
- forming selective / biased perceptions

**Share**
- a common style feedback

**Stay**
- on track to complete the assignment
- united by resolving conflict whenever it arises
Tuckman's model of team development

Forming

Storming

Norming

Performing

Adapted from Tuckman (1965)
Tuckman's model of team development

**Forming**

• Initial stage - 'polite' stage
• There is a lack of focus
• Usually no one wants to take the lead
• Members get to know each and think about goals

Adapted from Tuckman (1965)
Tuckman's model of team development

**Storming**

- Team members become more comfortable with each other
- Goals and objectives are set
- Conflicts can arise - Tolerance is important
- Differences must be resolved

Adapted from Tuckman (1965)
Tuckman's model of team development

**Norming**

- Members are aware of each other's positive and negative traits
- Pressure to conform
- Working towards the goal
- Positive attitude is important

Adapted from Tuckman (1965)
Tuckman's model of team development

**Performing**

• The team works as a unit
• Members are motivated
• Tasks are delegated to members based on their skills
• Members feel secure

Adapted from Tuckman (1965)
Working in teams...

... can be demanding

... can increase productivity of the given task

... usually features times of ‘strife’

... can develop individual performance skills

... requires good ‘people skills’

... can enhance interpersonal skills

... requires very good communication skills

... can help hone negotiation skills

... is strengthened if there is consistent contact across the team

... is a necessary skill that future employers will look for on CVs/applications
Resolving Conflicts

• Conflict happens!

• Allow both/all parties to calm down

• Confront the issues directly, but with care, tact and precision

  What is the problems?

  Why is the problem happening?

• Make sure your and everyone’s points of views are known

• If you are the person being criticised, maybe the criticism is fair and you need to accept it?
Useful Tips

• Maintain contact with your group members (via email / text / Social Media / Whatsapp etc.)

• Schedule regular meetings outside of the teaching sessions

• Before each team meeting create a list of points to discuss
Useful Tips

• By the end of each meeting create a list of action points and decide who will work on completing each of these tasks

• Ensure one person takes notes at each meeting and send these to every member afterwards so that you all know which tasks need to be completed to progress further

• Plan the tasks in stages and set manageable time limits in which to complete them
Useful Tips

• Two students should work on each task so that they can discuss ideas, and if one person is unwell or unavailable then the other can continue the task

• Respect each other’s right to express a view

• Consider booking a group tutorial to discuss any queries or problems you have related to the project
Scenario

One of your group members is frequently absent and has contributed very little to the coursework.

What should the group do?
Scenario

On the day of the presentation one of your group members doesn’t show up for class.

What should the group do?
List of References


Any Questions?