UNIVERSITY OF OREGON | **School of Planning, Public Policy and Management**

Version 1.0

The Teamwork Project

Working in Teams

The School of Planning, Public Policy and Management trains professionals for work that involves considerable teamwork and group interaction. Throughout your career you will have to work on teams with and without oversight or authority, which means it is important to develop teamwork skills related to communication, facilitation, group process, inclusivity, and conflict resolution. You will also be working with diverse teams, advisory committees, task forces, and community-based organizations, and your ability to help create an inclusive environment will be important for their success.

When we asked our Alumni Advisory Committee to comment on teams, they flooded us with feedback:

- "Group dynamics is an integral part of the content of this program…Failure to understand how to work in group dynamics will lead to a quick career change." —*Nick Lelack, Community Development Director, Deschutes County*
- "It is basically every day all day long in my job (affordable housing development). I work in external and internal teams and both are challenging." —*Kristen Karle, St. Vincent de Paul*
- "I could probably talk for hours on this…As a regional manager in charge of oversight of the sales and marketing for three offices along with the need to coordinate with our national office; my day is completely about group work and managing expectations of my team members and our clients." —*Michelle Meador, Moss Adams LLP*

What are the concerns about team projects?

In a recent PPPM student survey, some students were critical of the amount of group work and had concerns about bad team experiences. PPPM professors have also experienced difficulties as team members and instructors, so we are sensitive to these issues. We have been working on sharing strategies to address these concerns, including:

- Creating distinct group and individual grade components
- Improving peer assessment processes
- Developing better group supervision strategies
- Implementing best practices for group projects.

However, students commented that (1) group work on a job involves more accountability and slackers get fired or reprimanded; and (2) professional supervisors play a more direct role in overseeing teams. So we asked our alumni about these perspectives.

Student Comment 1: Work on the job involves more accountability and slackers will get fired or reprimanded
- FAR easier said than done. In the private sector, employers may have trade secrets that they do not wish to expose through firing an underperforming employee, so they may be in positions to make difficult decisions regarding how to address this issue. In the non-profit sector, firing an employee may upset major donors who have established relationships with the underperforming staff person – and may not care if/how they are contributing to a group. —*Nick Lelack, Community Development Director, Deschutes County*
- In the public sector and other large organizations, it is hard to "fire" people. I have fired people who did not work well in a team setting or carry their weight, but it is very hard and can take over

a year to go through the process and takes much effort and time by the supervisor. —*Paul Norris (retired ODOT)*

- As a manager for much of my career in the private sector, I also want to speak to the notion that it is easy to fire someone in the private sector…. it's not (unfortunately, at times). I have a member of my team right now that is a 'challenge'…and the solution is simple (albeit not fun) …the rest of us pick up the slack. —*Greg Pulliam, Manager, XTO Energy, Inc.*
- Very rarely to people get fired. There is a very specific process that needs to be followed even in the private/nonprofit world. It's not easy. Besides that, people just don't like to fire other people. —*Kristen Karle, St. Vincent de Paul*
- Professional experience has shown me that (a) this behavior will isolate coasters and they will find themselves left out + ignored while the process moves forward without them (b) folks who claim credit for others' work, will invariably depart the organization when the game is up. Sometimes it takes a while for this to play out. —*Inga Fisher Williams (Retired, Federal Agency Employee)*
- I wish this was the case but unfortunately most often it is not. Just as in school there are plenty of team members who do not pull the same amount of weight and do not get fired. It just isn't that easy with HR laws and the need for client work to get done. —*Michelle Meador, Moss Adams LLP*
- Easier said than done. It almost never happens, particularly in a collective bargaining unit environment. —*Jeff Towery, City of Springfield*

Student Comment 2: Workplace teams have more oversight

- I have worked in both the private and nonprofit sector and throughout my years I have had varying levels of supervisors. I would have to say that in the "real world" there is far less supervision than in school working on a school project. —*Michelle Meador, MOSS ADAMS LLP*
- Ideally yes, but some supervisors are very hands off (from benign neglect to allowing a team to figure it out on their own). Some aren't very good at their jobs. Some are so immersed in every detail that it doesn't help and can make things worse. —*Jeff Towery, City of Springfield*
- Many, many teams that you work on as a professional are external teams. You have zero contact with an external team's supervisor and no idea what priority the project at hand is for other organizations and other team members. What is even more challenging is when you are in 'external teams' with people who have power over you/your project organization (i.e. funders, regulators). —*Kristen Karle, St. Vincent de Paul*
- Yes, a quality supervisor operates with a project work plan that clearly defines roles and responsibilities for each team member, establishes specific and clear deliverables, identifies deadlines, and holds everyone accountable by measuring performance. However, per my comments above, supervisors cannot force employees to change their behaviors and contribute to a group. In the end, each team member must make a choice/decision to contribute to a group. —*Nick Lelack, Community Development Director, Deschutes County*

Teamwork is an Important "Soft Skill" You Should Hone in this Program

The feedback from our alumni is clear:

- You will have to work in teams throughout your career
- You may have bad teams with slackers

- You will work in teams with little supervision
- These teams and their performance may affect your ability to get your job done
- Your time at the University is the best opportunity to practice and refine your group process skills

Whether you come into PPPM with lots of work experience or none, the soft skills you hone may be some of the most important throughout your career. Therefore, think of group work not as a problem but a learning experience. You are learning as much about yourself and group dynamics as about content.

Teams and Leaders Need to Create Inclusive Environments

You will be working with diverse people and communities throughout your career and our alumni emphasize that they are looking for graduates with the skills to work well in this context. Supporting equity and inclusion is also a key goal of the School of PPPM, and it takes everyone (faculty, staff, and students) to make this happen. This includes your team projects. Therefore, you should be aiming to build inclusivity with every team during your PPPM degree. This teamwork guide only touches on diversity and inclusion, but it will a key part of your learning process.

Group Work Guide: Purpose of this Packet

We have developed this packet to provide a resource to student teams and instructors. We begin this guide with the basic team work principles we would like to promote in PPPM.

School of PPPM Team Work Principles

- I will not be a slacker: We will all do our parts in the group project
- I will learn about my peers: We will learn about our different styles, strengths and approaches
- I will be inclusive: We will embrace our differences to be a more effective team
- I will be respectful: We will respect each other's backgrounds, orientations and views
- I will speak up and listen: We will have open communication even when topics are difficult
- I will collaborate: We will try to solve group problems together constructively
- I will learn: We will learn content and learn to improve our group process
- I will seek help: We will seek help early if we are having problems

For each major topic we have summarized some basic ideas and presented worksheets, checklists or other information to help groups. Some steps may be more than you need for a short team project, but all of the information includes resources you can use in a range of settings throughout your career.

Included in this resource guide:

- ✓ Assessing Your Strengths
- ✓ Group Logistics
- ✓ Inclusive Leadership
- ✓ Project Management
- ✓ Managing Group Meetings
- ✓ Group Communication
- ✓ Diverse Teams
- ✓ Managing Team Differences

Assessing Your Strengths

PPPM has been working with the Holden Center for Leadership and Community Engagement at the University of Oregon to help students use StrenghtsFinder to undertake individual or group assessments to learn more about their styles and be more effective. The information below is from the Holden Center.

What is StrengthsFinder?

Clifton StrengthsFinder is a tool that provides you with the opportunity to develop strengths by building on what you do best – the way you most naturally think, feel, and behave as a unique individual. The 30-minute online assessment has international presence as a talent measurement instrument and has currently helped students at more than 600 schools and universities to discover and build upon:

- Behavior patterns that make you effective
- Thought patterns that make you efficient
- Beliefs that empower you to succeed
- Attitudes that sustain your efforts toward achievement and excellence
- Motivations that propel you to take action and maintain the energy needed to achieve

Quick Reference Guide to Strengths Basics

Talents come naturally, but strengths are earned.

- A strength is the ability to consistently produce a positive outcome through near-perfect performance in a specific task.
    - ⟩ Example: the ability to recommend the perfect services for a client's needs.
    - ⟩ Example: the ability to always meet your family's grocery needs on a tight budget.
- Skills are your basic abilities to perform the fundamental steps of a task.
    - ⟩ Example: the ability to move through the fundamental steps of a complex task.
    - ⟩ Skills do not naturally exist within us; they must be acquired through training and practice.
- Knowledge is simply what you know.
    - ⟩ Example: your awareness of historical dates and your grasp of the rules of a game.
    - ⟩ Knowledge does not naturally exist within us; it must be acquired through education.
- Talents are the ways in which you naturally think, feel, and behave.
    - ⟩ Example: the inner drive to compete.
    - ⟩ Example: sensitivity to the needs of others.
    - ⟩ Example: the tendency to be outgoing at social gathering.
    - ⟩ Although talents must come into existence naturally and cannot be acquired like skills and knowledge, we each have unique talents within us.

Because your most powerful talents represent the best of your natural self, they are your best opportunities to perform at levels of excellence through strength.

Your **dominant talents** naturally appear frequently and powerfully. Almost no matter where you are or what you are doing, your dominant talents are active.

Your **supporting talents** naturally surface only when their support is needed, and do so with only relative power. Because they aren't as powerful, your supporting talents are unlikely to serve as a foundation for strength.

Your **lesser talents** naturally appear rarely, and they offer little power. Because of that minimal power, lesser talents seldom contribute to strength.

StrengthsFinder Map Template

The following template has been provided by Chris Ruiz de Esparza at the UO Holden Center. This table can be used to map the strengths of your group and the areas where you may be lacking strengths. This may also help you understand why you approach problems and group work in different ways.

TEAM NAME DATE	EXECUTING									INFLUENCING								RELATIONSHIP BUILDING									STRATEGIC THINKING							
	Achiever	Arranger	Belief	Consistency	Deliberative	Discipline	Focus	Responsibility	Restorative	Activator	Command	Communication	Competition	Maximizer	Self-Assurance	Significance	Woo	Adaptability	Developer	Connectedness	Empathy	Harmony	Includer	Individualization	Positivity	Relator	Analytical	Context	Futuristic	Ideation	Input	Intellection	Learner	Strategic
Participant A	4	2																							5					3			1	
Participant B								4		5				1										2		3								

Executing: Let's work harder!	Influencing: Let's motivate others!	Relationship: Let's work together!	Strategic: Let's work smarter!
Leaders with dominant strength in the Executing domain know how to make things happen. When you need someone to implement a solution, these are the people who will work tirelessly to get it done. Leaders with a strength to execute have the ability to "catch" an idea and make it a reality.	Those who lead by Influencing help their team reach a much broader audience. People with strength in this domain are always selling the team's ideas inside and outside the organization. When you need someone to take charge, speak up, and make sure your group is heard, look to someone with the strength to influence.	Those who lead through Relationship Building are the essential glue that holds a team together. Without these strengths on a team, in many cases, the group is simply a composite of individuals. In contrast, leaders with exceptional Relationship Building strength have the unique ability to create groups and organizations that are much greater than the sum of their parts.	Leaders with great Strategic Thinking strengths are the ones who keep us all focused on what could be. They are constantly absorbing and analyzing information and helping the team make better decisions. People with strength in this domain continually stretch our thinking for the future.

Group Logistics

Managing Self Directed Teams

In classes and professional positions you will often work on a self-directed team, which means you don't have a direct manager or boss keeping a close eye on everything you do. In particular, if you are collaborating with people from other organizations there will be no one person with authority over others. Therefore, in class projects (and professional settings) you will need to decide how you want to operate to be effective and avoid problems. Here are some tips to help your group.

- Assign a coordinator: if someone has project management or leadership experience, don't be afraid to assign someone the task of keeping the team on track.
- Take turns leading: assign different people to lead different phases of the project if you have multiple people interested in this; it's good experience but requires more coordination.
- Talk about group expectations: discuss work habits, timelines and getting assigned tasks completed. One of the most common tensions relates to people not getting assigned work done on time for the group. If this happens discuss this missed deadline as a group.
- Be efficient: Develop an agenda for each meeting, assign a facilitator, assign tasks at the end of each meeting, and check in on how the meeting went. Meeting facilitation is a good role to rotate so that everyone gets experience.
- Affirm each team member's unique experiences, points of view, knowledge and opinions: use your different perspectives to collaborate and develop creative solutions.
- If problems emerge: discuss them or meet with your instructor to discuss the issues. Sometimes small issues grow into big ones when you approach pressures and deadlines. **Check with your instructor: (1) Will there be a team check-in? (2) Will the instructor having you assess your peers' contributions at the end of the term?**
- Leave time for report refinement: expect to re-write, edit, improve the layout, change the design, identify new information needs, etc. Groups often get into trouble because they don't leave enough time at the end for compiling and refining their work.

Some Key Steps

- Complete the group expectations worksheet (next Group Logistics Worksheet).
- Map out the project milestones and deadlines (see Project Management Section).
- Set up a meeting schedule.
  - 〉 If possible set your meeting dates for the entire term.
  - 〉 It's easier to cancel or have a short meeting than schedule a new one.
- Check in with each other on how your group is working.

Group Logistics Worksheet

Team Expectations

What grade do I want to get in this class?	A ☐	B ☐	C ☐	Pass ☐	Don't Care ☐
On a spectrum, how do you typically work on a major project (try to be honest)?	Work through it steadily ☐	☐	☐	☐	Delay and work hard at the very end ☐
What constraints do you have on your time and schedule? (work, family, other classes, other events)					
What do you hope to gain from this group assignment?					
Other Issues: ⟩ How do you prefer to communicate? ⟩ What do you like/not like about working on teams?					

Quick Schedule Planner

Availability for regular meeting times	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Example of Team Operating Guidelines

Discuss the following points with the members of your team and tick those with which you ALL agree. Sign and date your copy.

- ☐ I will contribute and share my ideas equally with other team members.
- ☐ I will listen to and value the ideas of other team members.
- ☐ I will be open to new ideas and to different ways of working.
- ☐ I will encourage other team members.
- ☐ I will give feedback in the form of constructive criticism.
- ☐ I will bring a positive attitude to teamwork in this project.
- ☐ I will complete tasks assigned within the group on time.
- ☐ I will attend all team meetings decided on by the group.
- ☐ If delayed, I will advise the other members of the team in advance.
- ☐ I will do my share of the work associated with the team project.
- ☐ My contributions will equal (or exceed) others in quality.
- ☐ Other:_____
- ☐ Other:_____

Signed:_____ Date:_____

Inclusive Leadership

Excerpts from: "The Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership." by Juliet Bourke, Bernadette Dillon
https://dupress.deloitte.com/dup-us-en/topics/talent/six-signature-traits-of-inclusive-leadership.html

The six signature traits of an inclusive leader

Whether you are an individual leader in the group or you are sharing the leadership role, developing an inclusive team will make you more effective. Bourke and Dillon have researched the practices of inclusive leadership and they present six key traits of inclusive leaders.

<u>Trait 1: Commitment.</u> **Highly inclusive leaders are committed to diversity and inclusion because these objectives align with their personal values and because they believe in the business case.**
Many of the leaders interviewed in our research cited the extrinsic reward of enhanced performance as a secondary motivator. Their primary motivation for pursuing diversity and inclusion was alignment with their own personal values and a deep-seated sense of fairness. "To me, it's all about fairness and equality of opportunity," says Belinda Hutchinson, chancellor of the University of Sydney. "It's about giving people the opportunity to achieve what they should be able to achieve. It doesn't just relate to gender. It relates to race, religion, sexual preference—whatever else it may be."

<u>Trait 2: Courage.</u> **Highly inclusive leaders speak up and challenge the status quo, and they are humble about their strengths and weaknesses.**
For leaders, they need to make a decision as to whether they dig in and entrench as they are, or recognize the world as it will become, and be part of the change." The courage to speak up—to challenge others and the status quo—is a central behavior of an inclusive leader, and it occurs at three levels: with others, with the system, and with themselves.
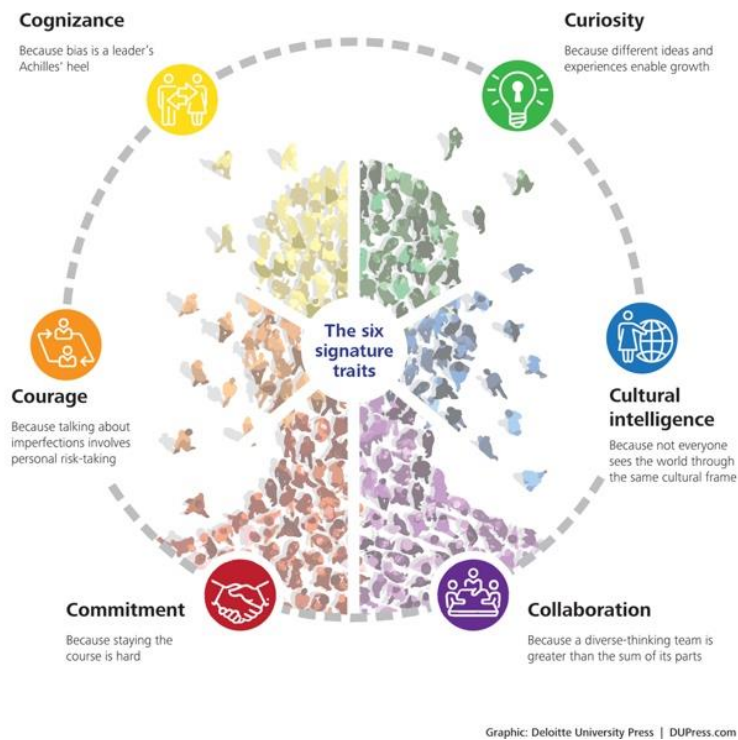
Inclusive leaders have the courage to speak out about themselves and to reveal, in a very personal way, their own limitations. Instead of shying away from the challenge of imperfection, highly inclusive leaders adopt an attitude of humility…It is difficult for leaders in the public spotlight to admit they don't have all the answers. Courage and humility therefore go hand in hand.

<u>Trait 3: Cognizance of bias.</u> **Highly inclusive leaders are mindful of personal and organizational blind spots, and self-regulate to help ensure "fair play."**
"The leaders that are inclusive do a couple of things," says Sodexo's Anand. "At the individual level, they are very self-aware, and they act on that self-awareness. And they acknowledge that their organizations, despite best intentions, have unconscious bias, and they put in place policies, processes, and structures in order to mitigate the unconscious bias that exists."

Biases are a leader's Achilles' heel, potentially resulting in decisions that are unfair and irrational. Inclusive leaders are deeply aware that biases can narrow their field of vision and prevent them from making objective decisions. In particular, inclusive leaders are highly sensitized to two fundamental phenomena: personal biases, such as homophily and implicit stereotypes and attitudes; and process biases, such as confirmation bias and groupthink.[32]

Figure 1. The six signature traits of an inclusive leader

Cognizance — Because bias is a leader's Achilles' heel

Curiosity — Because different ideas and experiences enable growth

Courage — Because talking about imperfections involves personal risk-taking

Cultural intelligence — Because not everyone sees the world through the same cultural frame

Commitment — Because staying the course is hard

Collaboration — Because a diverse-thinking team is greater than the sum of its parts

The six signature traits

Graphic: Deloitte University Press | DUPress.com

Trait 4: Curiosity. Highly inclusive leaders have an open mindset, a desire to understand how others view and experience the world, and a tolerance for ambiguity.

Inclusive leaders accept their limitations and hunger for the views of others to complete the picture. This thirst for continual learning helps drive attributes associated with curiosity—open-mindedness, inquiry, and empathy. Such behaviors do not come easily. Time and effort are required to engage with diverse others, as is the skill of synthesizing a broader range of perspectives. But the result is loyalty from others who feel valued, along with access to a richer set of information that enables better decision making.

Trait 5: Culturally intelligent. Highly inclusive leaders are confident and effective in cross-cultural interactions.

For inclusive leaders, the ability to function effectively in different cultural settings is about more than just having a mental map of different cultural frameworks (for example, Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory). While an understanding of cultural similarities and differences is important, inclusive leaders also recognize how their own culture impacts their personal worldview, as well as how cultural stereotypes—including the misuse of cultural models—can influence their expectations of others.

At a deeper level, inclusive leaders' thirst for learning means that they are also motivated to deepen their cultural understanding and to learn from the experience of working in an unfamiliar environment. This curiosity leads them to value cultural differences, defying ethnocentric tendencies that cause people to judge other cultures as inferior to their own, and enabling them to build stronger connections with people from different backgrounds.

Trait 6: Collaborative. Highly inclusive leaders empower individuals as well as create and leverage the thinking of diverse groups.

"The new IQ is based more on group intelligence," says Bruce Stewart, acting director, strategic initiatives, US Office of Personnel Management. "The old IQ is about how smart you are; the new IQ is about how smart you make your team. If you take it to heart, it will change the way you lead. Instead of the leader leading from top of the pyramid, they lead from the middle of the circle."

At its core, collaboration is about individuals working together, building on each other's ideas to produce something new or solve something complex. But while collaboration among similar people is comfortable and easy, the challenge and opportunity thrown up by the foundational shifts is collaboration with diverse others: employees, customers, or other stakeholders.

Project Management

Some students have struggled with team based projects because (1) they have little or no experience organizing, planning, and managing a project; and (2) previous projects have had a project manager. This section is designed to help you overcome both of those challenges through four key steps.

1. Project Initiation

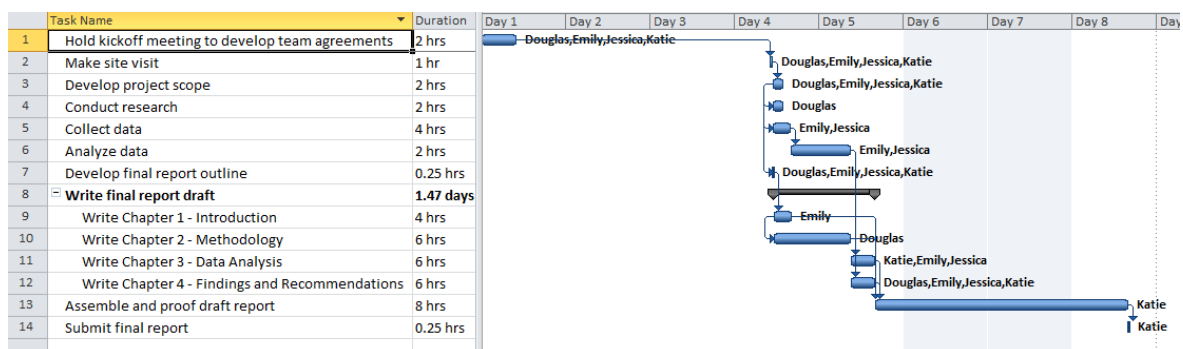*Timing: as soon as team is formed.*

Project initiation is seen as a waste of time because it doesn't produce anything, so we tend to dive in and start work. Successful project initiation starts with a team meeting to get to know each other and discuss goals and expectations (see Group Logistics)

2. Project Planning

Timing: As soon as the project is understood by the team.

The first step is to discuss and agree on the project scope based on the assignment or meeting with your client or instructor. The scope is the boundaries of the project and everyone (client, instructor, team) must agree what is part of the project, and what is not part of the project. Only after you have agreed on the scope can someone facilitate a team process to develop a work plan. Using Post-It notes in a room with a large white or blackboard to:

1. *Develop a list of project tasks*. A task is anything that lasts more than an hour.
2. *Arrange the tasks in order of completion*, from top to bottom.
3. *Determine task dependencies*. Some tasks can happen simultaneously or may be dependent on completion of prior tasks. Rearrange Post-Its as needed, and draw lines to indicate task dependencies.
4. *Estimate time to complete each task*. Overestimate task duration and build in extra time. For example, editing a final report **always** takes longer than expected, so build in slack to meet deadlines.
5. *Assign a team member(s) to complete each task.*
6. *Look for resource conflicts or over allocations*. Is someone doing two tasks at once or unavailable?
7. *Take a picture of your project plan*. Recreate your plan in Microsoft Excel, or any of a number of web-based project management apps, for future reference. The example shown is from Microsoft Project.

	Task Name	Duration
1	Hold kickoff meeting to develop team agreements	2 hrs
2	Make site visit	1 hr
3	Develop project scope	2 hrs
4	Conduct research	2 hrs
5	Collect data	4 hrs
6	Analyze data	2 hrs
7	Develop final report outline	0.25 hrs
8	**Write final report draft**	**1.47 days**
9	Write Chapter 1 - Introduction	4 hrs
10	Write Chapter 2 - Methodology	6 hrs
11	Write Chapter 3 - Data Analysis	6 hrs
12	Write Chapter 4 - Findings and Recommendations	6 hrs
13	Assemble and proof draft report	8 hrs
14	Submit final report	0.25 hrs

3. Project Execution, Monitoring, and Controlling

Timing: As soon as work begins, until the final product is submitted.

It is important that the team meets on a regular basis to discuss progress and any challenges that team members may be encountering. The work plan should be reviewed and discussed at every meeting, and adjustments made as needed to ensure that deadlines are met and they have met all the details of their assignment.

4. Project Closing

Timing: The last days prior to due date.

This can be a time of high stress. Team members should maintain lines of communication and be ready to help each other to ensure successful project completion.

Project Management Worksheet

Use this worksheet (or develop your own) to map out your project. Consider the following in mapping out your project:

- Deadline: what is your deadline and start working back from that date.
- Editing/Synthesis/Review: build in some time to review, edit, or practice the final product.
- Set milestones along the way: set interim deadlines (the end of term can seem a long way away) to help keep you on track.
- Designate a lead for each task who is responsible for completion or making sure a group of you complete the task.

Project Task	Duration	Lead person	Timeline (days or weeks)									

Managing Group Meetings

You will spend a lot of your career in meetings. The more efficient and effective those meetings, the more efficient and effective you will be. Facilitators that work with groups try to help them with these tasks, and the following tips can help you work more effectively.

Spend Some Time on Ground Rules

Many people think ground rules are a waste of precious teamwork time. If the group never has any problems this can be true, but if difficulties emerge then the group is debating both the content and the process. Suddenly a conversation about a subject matter dives into, "You are dominating the conversation too much" or "I thought we were going to make decisions by consensus" or "Does consensus mean majority or does everyone have to agree?" When you get into a difficult situation, the group can reference your ground rules. See the Managing Group Meetings Worksheet for ideas.

Tips for Running a Meeting

Here are some facilitator tips for running an effective meeting

- Begin and end the meeting on time
- Use an agenda created in advance or at the start of the meeting
  - 〉 Prioritize the agenda (for example, by deadlines)
  - 〉 Allocate time to each item
- Review actions from your previous meeting
  - 〉 What has been completed/not completed
  - 〉 What decisions did you make before
- Designate someone to keep notes
  - 〉 Record major points and ideas
  - 〉 Make note of tangents or other issues that you can come back to (this is sometimes called the "parking lot" for topics that you want to capture but don't want to get sidetracked into discussing)
- Summarize the meeting
  - 〉 What are the key points and decisions?
  - 〉 What are the tasks and assignments?
    - ▪ Define the task
    - ▪ Assign it to someone
    - ▪ Set a completion date

Use Meetings as a Learning Process

No one ever runs a perfect meeting, so treat every meeting as a learning process:

- Take turns leading or facilitating the meeting
- Take 2 minutes at the end of the meeting to evaluate the facilitator or leader
  - 〉 What things did they do well
  - 〉 What could they improve upon

Sample List of Ground Rules

Review these ground rules: amend them; clarify them; add to them. Share a final copy with everyone so you can refer to them periodically. The group can also check in with the ground rules to make sure you are still following them (Kaner, 1996).

- Listen actively and with an ear to understanding others' views.
- Make room all of our identities in a safe space.
- Consider power and privilege.
- Make space to learn from others.
- Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- Allow everyone the chance to speak–don't monopolize the discussion.
- Critique ideas, not people.
- Commit to learning.
- Commit to sharing information, not to persuade.
- Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
- Ask for clarification if you are confused.
- Avoid put-downs (even humorous ones).
- Avoid assumptions about any member of the class or generalizations about social groups.
- Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.
- Do not offer opinions without supporting evidence; beware of the danger of a single story.
- Take responsibility for the quality of the discussion.
- Don't be afraid to participate, but be open to challenges if you say something that hurts someone

Decide How You Will Decide

Groups often have the most difficulty when they need to reach decisions. If you don't decide in advance how you will make decisions things can get very messy. Below are some decision options to consider.

Decision Option	Pros	Cons
Majority vote	〉 Fast and efficient 〉 Good option for low stakes decisions	〉 May mean that almost half of your group is not supportive (e.g., 3-2) 〉 May ignore minority viewpoints 〉 May lead to premature decisions
Super Majority Vote (e.g., 75%) Or Consensus Minus One	〉 Fast and efficient 〉 Good option for low stakes decisions 〉 Works well with large groups 〉 Higher threshold for agreement 〉 "Minus one" prevents one person from holding up a decision	〉 Sizeable number of people may still disagree (e.g., 2 out of 10) 〉 May ignore minority viewpoints 〉 May lead to premature decisions
Complete Consensus	〉 Forces all perspectives to be heard and incorporated 〉 Requires everyone to find a common solution	〉 More time consuming 〉 May not lead to an agreement 〉 Means "I can live with it" not "I think that is the best outcome "

Group Communication

Effective group communication starts with sending clear messages and active listening. The steps below provide some strategies for active listening. For a different perspective, Celeste Headlee rejects techniques and provides ten useful rules for having better conversations and promote better dialogue. https://www.ted.com/talks/celeste_headlee_10_ways_to_have_a_better_conversation

Four Steps to Active Listening

1. <u>Active listening:</u> listening through questions and feedback
   〉 Paraphrasing: restating in your own words using statements like:
     ▪ "What I hear you saying…"
     ▪ "In other words…"
     ▪ "Do you mean?…"
     ▪ "Do I understand that you thought…."
   〉 Clarifying: Asking questions until you get the complete picture
     ▪ Do you mean this or this?
     ▪ I'm not sure what you mean by…
   〉 Feedback: non-judgmental reaction—honest and supports dialogue
     ▪ I wonder if [your description] is what is really happening.
     ▪ Do you think xxx would feel differently?
2. <u>Listening with empathy:</u> recognize their views may come from personal experience
   〉 They may be angry for a reason
   〉 They may be hurt by their experience
3. <u>Listening with openness:</u> try putting yourself in their shoes to understand what they are saying
   〉 If you can understand their views, you can understand them
   〉 Test: try arguing the opposite perspective with someone
4. <u>Listening with awareness:</u> compare message with knowledge and their body language
   〉 Their body language
   〉 Your experience
   〉 Your knowledge of people, history, etc.

Sending Messages Effectively

- Clearly own your messages
  〉 Use first person pronouns ("I" and "me")
- Make your messages complete and specific
  〉 Include clear statements with all the information
  〉 Make sure you are explaining all leaps of thinking
- Make your verbal and non-verbal messages congruent
- Be redundant
- Ask for feedback on how your messages are being received
- Make the message appropriate for the receiver
- Describe your feelings by name, action, or figure of speech

- Describe others' behavior without interpreting:
  - 〉 YES: You keep interrupting me
  - 〉 NO: You are an ego-driven person who won't listen to anyone

Communication and Group Process

Teams involve people with different styles and personalities. The following sections describe different types of decision making (based on Myers-Briggs type of personality categories) and how to incorporate these differences in dialogue. https://www.psychometrics.com/mbtiblog/team-building/team-decision-making-inclusive-intentional/

Extroverts: tend quickly throw out ideas without taking much time to think, preferring to analyze the ideas and build a solution with the group. Their spoken ideas are just beginning to be formed and should not be taken as their final way to solve the problem. **Question for teams:** Before a decision is made, are we allowing enough time for discussion and digestion? Has everyone come prepared to engage?

Introverts: need to take the ideas of others and reflect on them. Their spoken ideas tend to be formed to a much greater extent than extraverts. As a result, they are open to minor adjustments but struggle with wholesale changes that they have already thought out and committed to. **Question for teams:** In addition to discussion, have we allowed enough time before and after for refinement, consideration and reflection?

Sensors: like to gather facts and adopt a practical, hands-on approach. Sensors want to deal with the problem in front of them with what they know to be true from either experience or facts. **Question for teams:** When making decisions or solving problems, are we always keeping resources, realities and parameters in mind? Do we honor what has been done in the past before moving forward?

Intuitors: like global schemes and want to consider all future possibilities and challenges. As a result, they often want to consider the alternatives and implications over and above what exists in front of them. **Question for teams:** Are we putting the present realities into a larger context before making a decision? Are we open minded to changes, and reminding ourselves of the strategic implications?

Thinkers: stay personally removed from the problem-solving process, adopting an intellectually objective and impersonal reasoning style. They like to examine the pros and cons and select what appears to be the best route. **Question for teams:** Are we remaining objective as we gather alternatives in our decision making? Are we preserving the deliverable, focusing on efficiency and maximizing benefit versus loss?

Feelers: take into account how the process affects people. They can give very accurate accounts of how the people involved will react. As a result, they tend to act as a good barometer of how people will respond to proposed solutions. **Question for teams:** Are we also seeking consensus when appropriate, and prioritizing peoples' needs when the decision heavily impacts those involved?

Judgers: are solution-oriented. They desire to bring things to a conclusion and their search for closure can limit the number of alternatives explored. Judgers can visualize the end, plan towards it and quickly move towards it. **Question for teams:** When making a decision how do we plan implementation contingencies? Are we making a plan and working the plan while keeping ourselves accountable for the solutions?

Perceivers: tend to deal with problem solving by continually reworking solutions until the best approach is identified. Their strength is using new information and adjusting their solutions appropriately. **Question for teams:** Are we remaining flexible enough in our final decision to adjust for new data? When and how will we check in and follow up to ensure success and champion a new plan if necessary?

Diverse Teams

A diverse workplace might ultimately create better results.

A study, detailed by NPR, looks at the work of scientific researchers and finds that papers written by multicultural teams were cited in other research more often than those written by homogenous groups. In the world of research, citations are seen as a metric of quality. Ethnic diversity wasn't the only harbinger of success. The same study also found that groups with members from several geographic areas—perhaps three cities in the same country—also created better papers than those with members from the same place.

The principle isn't an entirely new one. The idea that different perspectives result in better work has been explored from a more macro-economic perspective, as research shows that diverse cities experience more economic growth. The idea is also at play in research showing that companies with females on their boards financially outperform those that don't.

However, building multicultural teams does put a premium on the manager. For instance, it's worth exploring recent research from Harvard. That work, spearheaded by organizational behavior professor Roy Chua, finds that multicultural teams bring many benefits to an organization—provided the workplace is harmonious. However, rifts between members of different cultures can cause even those team members not directly involved in the conflict to produce lesser work, Chua's study shows. Chua suggests that managers of culturally diverse teams should encourage practices to keep potential friction low.

Dominant / Subordinate Groups

One key concept to keep in mind is that people in a group don't have equal power. This does not just refer to supervisory power, but also the access to power and resources throughout each person's lifetime. The Diverse Teams Worksheet provides a way to "tallying" the ways in which people might find themselves at an advantage/disadvantage.

Some Key Concepts About Dominant/Subordinated Group Dynamics
(Source: Kathy Obear, Ed.D., Alliance for Change Consulting, http://drkathyobear.com/):
- Not always about numbers
- Includes both Visible and Invisible; Innate and Chosen
- People may be members of multiple groups
- Not always about individual behaviors or feelings
- You didn't ask for it and you can't give it back

Dominant Groups	Subordinated Groups
〉 Greater access to power and resources 〉 Make the Rules 〉 Define what is "normal," "right," the "Truth" 〉 Assumed to be the leader; smarter, competent 〉 Given the benefit of the doubt	〉 Less access to power and resources 〉 Often seen as less than, inferior, deficient 〉 Often assimilate, collude, abide by the rules, try to fit in 〉 Track the indignities they experience; aware of oppression

Dominant Groups	Subordinated Groups
〉 Often unaware of dominant group membership & privilege	〉 Punished if challenge the status quo
〉 Less aware about uninclusive and discriminatory treatment of subordinated groups	〉 Have their truth & experiences questioned and invalidated
〉 More comfortable with people from subordinated groups who share similar behaviors, appearance, and values	〉 Need to know the language, behavior norms, and everyday reality of dominant groups to survive
〉 Hold to dominant cultural beliefs, often without examination	〉 Often struggle with finding a balance between who they are and who they are told they need to
〉 Collude, and if challenged, risk being ostracized/punished	〉 be to be "acceptable"
〉 Focus on "how far we've come"	〉 Struggle with finding their voice and speaking up
	〉 Focus on "how far we need to go"

Diverse Teams Worksheet

Review the list of features that typically categorize dominant and subordinate groups in society. Add up how many correlate with your status. Try comparing your total number to each other (note that some people may not wish to reveal their responses to every question) and consider how someone might feel being an "outsider" and how it might be reflected in group work.

Dominant Group		Subordinate Group
30's to early 50's	1. Age	Younger; older
White	2. Race	Person of Color
Male	3. Biological	Sex Female; Intersex
Fit into the gender binary system– either masculine OR feminine	4. Gender Identity & Gender Expression	Gender Variant; Gender Queer; Ambiguous; Androgynous; Transgender
Executive leaders, managers, managers, supervisors	5. Hierarchical Level	Don't supervise others; Classified staff; Student staff; students
Heterosexual	6. Sexual Orientation	Gay; Lesbian; Bisexual; Queer
Upper class; upper middle class; middle	7. Class	Working class; Living in poverty class
Graduate or college degree; private	8. Educational Level	High school degree; Public schooling; 1st schooling generation to college
Protestant; Catholic	9. Religion/ Spirituality	Muslim; Jewish; Buddhist; Hindu; Mormon; Jehovah Witness; Agnostic; Atheist
U.S. born	10. National Origin	"Foreign born;" Born in a country other than the U.S.; undocumented
People who are "able-bodied"	11. Ableness	Disability; People with physical, mental, emotional and/or learning disability; People living with AIDS
"American;" Western European heritage	12. Ethnicity/Culture	Puerto Rican; Native American; Mexican; Nigerian; Chinese; Japanese; etc ...
Fit society's image of attractive,	13. Size/ Appearance	Perceived by others as too fat, tall, short, beautiful, handsome, athletic, unattractive, not athletic
Proficient in the use of "Proper" English	14. Use of English	Not proficient in use of English; have an "accent"
Legally married in a heterosexual relationship	15. Marital Status	Single; divorced; widowed; in a same-sex relationship partnership or marriage; in an unmarried heterosexual partnership
Parent children within a 2·parent heterosexual marriage	16. Parental Status	Single parent; do not have children; LGBT parents
More experience on campus	17. Experience	New; little experience on campus
Very athletic	18. Athleticism	Not very athletic
Suburban; valued region of the U.S.	19. Geographic region	Rural; urban; less valued region of the U.S.
Light skin; European/Caucasian features	20. Skin color; physical	Darker skin; African; Asian; Native American characteristics features
	TOTAL FOR EACH COLUMN	

Managing Team Differences

The popular book *Getting to Yes* (Fisher & Ury, 1981) identifies a range of strategies for groups to use when working together to help solve problems. They emphasize the potential of win-win scenarios through integrative bargaining rather than the typical win-lose scenarios that come from negotiation.

Principle	Description	Strategies
Separate the People from the Problem	〉 Be soft on people 〉 Be hard on the problem	〉 Use active listening to move beyond differences, anger or attitude. 〉 Sympathize and try to see it from their perspective. Ask them to do the same.
Focus on Interests Not Positions	〉 People start with positions—explore their interests	〉 Seek to understand why: "You state that you want X. Explain why you want X."
Invent Options for Mutual Gain	〉 Develop multiple options 〉 Decide choices later	〉 Once you understand interests, seek outcomes that satisfy everyone's interests. 〉 Develop a checklist: "How do we make sure we are addressing everyone's interests?"
Insist Upon Using Objective Criteria	〉 What are our standards for making a decision? 〉 Reason and be open to reason 〉 Yield to principle but not to pressure	〉 What are we using to judge whether an agreement will work for us? 〉 Discuss why an outcome will or will not meet our criteria. 〉 Incorporate everyone's criteria when we try to think of solutions.

Strategies for Consensus Decision Making

Source: Kaner, Sam. 1996. *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.

Big and complex problems often take time to work through collaboratively. Here is a quick summary of some steps that a group can use to support a consensus based approach:

- Brainstorm: take time to generate lots of ideas (individually and as a group) without pausing to assess, critique or analyze.
- Sort: categorize, vote on top ideas, categorize by criteria (time, cost, feasibility, etc.).
- Survey the territory: specify requirements, speak from own perspective, review facts and opinions, seek perspectives not represented, ask: who, what, when, where and how?
- Search for alternatives: raise difficult issues, brainstorm again, anything you are not saying?, share three complaints, gather diverse points of view.
- Create shared context: learn about each other's perspectives, get to know each other, identify meaningful themes.
- Explore inclusive solutions: identify common ground, "how can we do both?", use case studies, reframe the problem or constraints, identify what is unchangeable and what is not, clarify evaluation criteria.

Types of Disagreements

In the conflict resolution literature, there is a range of different ways to describing conflict. Sometimes it is important to understand the nature of the conflict to resolve it (Lord, 1979).

Conflict	Example	Strategy 1	Strategy 2
Personal	You don't like someone's idea because of their personality.	Focus on the problem rather than the people: "What are our criteria for making a decision?"	If you are affected by someone's behavior try to share it with them: "Your responses to my ideas makes me feel undervalued."
Technical	You disagree about the facts.	Do more research: "We seem to disagree about the effectiveness of this, let's each investigate."	Clarify the criteria: "Let's check the assignment (or with the instructor) to make sure we are approaching this correctly."
Interest	You disagree about how an outcome will affect people's interests.	Win/Loss/Other: "Who is going to win or lose from this? Can we compensate the losers or come up with a win-win scenario?	Wins/Losses/Other within the group: How can we address the needs of someone not getting what they want from this project?
Value	You disagree about values and value choices.	Explore value differences: "Why do you believe this is inherently right/wrong?"	Agree to disagree: "Rather than forcing change, we're going to point out different interpretations or different options."

Gradients of Agreement

Even if a group decides to operate by complete consensus, it does not mean that every member is completely satisfied with every decision. You can use a "gradient of agreement" to determine where you stand and use quick votes (show of fingers) to assess where you are (Kaner, 1996).

5: Endorsement	4: Endorse with Reservations	3: Abstain	2: Stand Aside	1: Block
"I like it"	"I can live with it"	"I have no opinion"	"I don't like it but I don't want to hold up the group."	"I veto this proposal"
Response: Explain why if necessary	Response: Explain reservations and how it could be addressed	Response: None	Response: Is there anything that could improve your view?	Response: Explain your concern. Do you have an alterative?