

PP Reflection

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1. What went well in the first meeting? Did they go well in the last meeting? Or better?

The first meeting went quite well overall. Everyone had an input, and all introductions were made. There were no communication issues - everyone was vocal in the first meeting - while some people may have been a little more shy/hesitant to have an input, they were invited to join in the discussion.

For the last meeting:

Clearly since introductions had already been made, in the last meeting there were no problems around this; and the focus was more spent on the task at hand. The people who had been somewhat shy in the first meeting were truly voicing their opinions by this point which was definitely an improvement.

2. What could have been improved in the first meeting? Did they improve? Why/why not?

There were a few small issues in the first meeting. We noted that we had neglected to discuss work delegation, that focus was somewhat lacking. After we identified that these were issues, they were both improved in our next external meeting. We improved them just by identifying that they were problems, and keeping a lot of our irrelevant discussion (personal/friendly) for after the meeting.

3. For each team mate, write down at least one thing they did well in the project so far.

Before going into individuals, it is worth noting that everyone had a positive attitude regarding working together and there were no qualms amongst the group members.

- Rose had the most background knowledge on optimisation and was very willing to explain the problem to the rest of the group so that everyone understood exactly what was going on.
- Byeongjun (Andy) was eager to get to work: only a few hours after the first meeting, and he had already converted all of the price information into an excel spreadsheet
- Lily played the main role in organising and mediating meetings. She made sure that work was getting done, and kept the group on task as much as possible.
- Samuel made sure that all our work was well organised, he kept files with all of the information the group had worked on together.
- Jared was not afraid to ask questions and push to make sure there were no mistakes or flaws in logic. He made sure that a lot of our methods took all possible viewpoints into account.

4. Looking back on the project so far, what went well?

This would probably be the lack of conflict. Often, university group assignments end up with some group members in arguments/disagreements about workload or approaches. Fortunately, there were absolutely no problems of this sort for our project. I would say this is because we shared the work evenly, everyone opted to do their part, and most of the time, the group was unanimous.

5. What could be improved?

The group somewhat avoided extension. We all mostly did our part and then stopped (unless more was requested). There was clearly a lot of opportunity to extend in this project, and the group did acknowledge many of these possibilities - but they were ignored as it would not affect the criteria-based marking.

6. What do you think are important factors for having an effective meeting?

I feel that for a meeting to be effective there have to be clearly defined and announced objectives. Everyone should know why they are in the meeting, their role, and what the focus will be on.

I also believe that the meeting must be kept on task - not allowing for other irrelevant topics to come up. If everyone is on task, no one will get bored or distracted, and objectives can be met.

Lastly a meeting should be short - this helps to maintain focus, and makes sure that time is not wasted.

Achieving each of these makes the others come more naturally.

7. Which of those are hard(est) to achieve? What can you do to achieve them?

I feel that defining clear objectives is the hardest part of a meeting to achieve, I also feel that it is the most *important* aspect of a meeting. This is best achieved by prior discussion (in person, social media, etc.), and not just pre-allocating arbitrary meetings. Meetings should be had when necessary, and only when there is a clear objective/goal to meet.

8. What situations at home, university, work and other places have things in common with this team exercise?

Trivially, other group projects, at university, have and will have many things in common with this group exercise, although there will always be different dynamics amongst the group members.

In terms of work, I am contracted to make websites based on a client's needs. Similarly to this group exercise, it is imperative for me to understand exactly what the client wants out of the project, and it helps significantly if they know what I am capable of. Most importantly, it helps if there is an open channel for clear communication at all times. If i can directly contact (or be contacted by) a client, we can very easily clear up any problems. In this group project we had a Facebook Messenger chat, where we could very easily clear up these small issues.

For my other job (Baucraft), we often have to have meetings over how we plan to approach a particular problem. Whenever we have a meeting, it is strictly dedicated to solving that problem, and we leave all outside distractions behind. By doing this we are able to identify our goals, and know exactly what we will be talking about. This is very similar to how my group handled meetings for this project, and how I feel meetings should be approached.

9. **Find some information online about team work and/or meetings that you think is useful, and that you can relate to your team work in this project. Briefly summarise the information and how it relates to your team work.**

The University of Adelaide writing centre has an informative handout about group work in general. It discusses the relevant skills, how to identify group expectations, how to manage the dynamics of a group and identifying personal attitude/behaviour.

The information which I feel would have been most useful for my group is regarding personal behaviour and group expectations. From the onset we had some minor issues with giving proper assertive input. Some members would be somewhat passive, while others could be aggressive (as per the documents' description) when there was even a small dispute. The writing centre suggests that it would be more ideal for us to make clear points, to be prepared to negotiate, while having respect and understanding for others' opinions.

As well as this, for identifying group expectations, as a group we did not really acknowledge what we personally wanted to achieve in the project. The document gives some clear questions which should be easily answered from the onset. For our group, I imagine we would have had difficulty answering (or possibly get different answers for) "What are the negotiated and agreed-upon rules of the group?". Working this out amongst ourselves before the project would have helped us to achieve our goals.

The second resource is one on running effective group meetings. It gives clear, simple tips on how to run a meeting. The main points I take away from it (which are relevant) are: 'Have a clear objective', 'be prepared', 'leave room for creativity', 'don't lose focus' and 'follow up'. For this project, I feel that *some* of our group members stuck to several of these, but there were some which were not entirely followed. For example, since we were not prepared for our first meeting (this was out of our control) we were unable to define a clear objective, and as such it was hard for us to stay focused. After our next meeting we had issues where we did not organise a follow-up meeting as soon as we probably should have; this lead to some rush-work just before the next meeting, rather than a steady flow of work.

Resources

<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/docs/learningguide-groupwork.pdf>

<https://www.scoro.com/blog/tips-for-effective-meeting-management/>