Summary of Teamwork Basics

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**Norms**

**1. Work Norms:** How will work be distributed? Who will set deadlines? What happens if someone doesn't follow through on his/her commitment (for example, misses deadline)? How will the work be reviewed? What happens if people have different opinions about the quality of the work? What happens if people have different work habits (e.g., some people like to get assignments done right away; others work better with the pressure of a deadline).

The work will be evenly distributed by the coordinator. At the same time, team member bases on their own situation to select the appropriate part they want to do. If there’s a conflict, they can consult with each other or the one that choose first can do the job.

Based on the different difficulty of each work, the deadline will be fairly set by each team member. And there should be an insurance measure which is the deadline must be set before at least one day of the day of submission. Thus, if someone has missed the deadline, there will be a way of remedy. If someone still not submits his or her job after a half day of deadline, he or she will be punished. And the rest of jobs will be done by other members.

The review part is also important. And as they submit their work, they might also provide some instructions, i.e., how to use the code or what did they do. Then the work will be distributed through all team and each member will give their opinions about others’ work.

If people have different opinions about the quality of the work, the one that did this job have the responsibility to tell what job he or she did and overall how much it relates with the job he or she is arranged. And if people have different work habits, there’s still the deadline that forces them to submit on time. This leaves enough time for the review part.

Jiawei had an experience in his Matlab and Numerical Analysis class when he was in China, in which he formed a team with other students. At first, they didn’t not have any strict rules of team work and they didn’t have a coordinator, so when they were arranged the first task, they didn’t give much concern on that. Thus, when the deadline is coming and there’s only one day left. Every member of the team started to ask others if they did the jobs. Apparently, no one did any of jobs. Even if they tried to do all of them, they still didn’t finish even half of the work. So, they lost a lot of points. After that, they decided to have some rules to regulate members, and choose an inspector to monitor others’ jobs. And that works. Finally, they get an ‘A’ in that class.

1. **Facilitator Norms:** Will you use a facilitator? How will the facilitator be chosen?

Will you rotate the position? What are the responsibilities of the facilitator? (see below)

Our team will use a facilitator. The facilitator will be chosen based on the behavior he or she shows in and after the class. If he or she always help the team to do the right thing, like to ease the conflict, and to make the team work more efficiently. Then he or she would be our facilitator.

And the responsibilities of facilitator would be:

1. Be enthusiastic to the project.
2. Help collect different opinions of group members and summarize to others.
3. Remind other members to participate the meetings or presentations on time.
4. When conflicts show up, make the optimized decision based on other’s opinion.
5. Cheer up others when they feel down about their work.

1. **Communication Norms:** When should communication takes place and through

what medium (e.g., do some people prefer to communicate through e-mail while others

would rather talk on the phone)?

When the new assignment is arranged and the work needs to be distributed, or team member meets with some problems that need other members’ help, the communication should be taken place. Our team prefer to communicate on the software “Discord” which is an efficient tool to connect with others. Besides, we will also schedule a physical meeting at least one time in two weeks.

1. **Meeting Norms:** What is everyone's schedule? Should one person be responsible for

coordinating meetings? Do people have a preference for when meetings are held? Where is a good place to hold meetings? What happens if people are late to a meeting? What happens if a group member misses a meeting? What if he/ she misses several meetings?

Based on everyone’s situation, our team firstly provided each one’s time schedule. Then we talked together to decide our first meeting is at Wednesday (January 30) one hour before the class. In our team, the coordinator collects others’ free time and make the final decision of the meeting time.

According to the place to hold meetings, we think the classroom is the best choice because after that we all will have class in that room. If in the following weeks the Wednesday does not work, we’ll reserve an empty room of school library and hold meeting there. If someone is late or miss for a meeting, he or she must explain and apologize to other members. Besides, in order to avoid that happen, we’ll optimize our meeting time to fit everyone. If someone misses several meetings, he or she will be punished. At the same time, he or she will be notified what has been discussed in the meeting, and maybe arranged the left job.

1. **Consideration Norms:** Can people eat at meetings? smoke? What happens

if someone is dominating the discussion? How can norms be changed if someone is not comfortable with what is going on in the team?

Our group has a free and comfortable atmosphere. So, we’ll respect others behavior like smoke or eat. However, if his or her habits has a negative effect on the project or other members, then the habits will not be accepted.

If someone dominates the discussion, he or she must have his unique perspective about the problems. Thus, we will listen him or her first. Then the facilitator or other member will evaluate his or her speech and provide some of their opinions. And at the end of the meeting, everyone will present their own ideas about this meeting.

The norms can be changed at any time if the member feels offense because of norms. And we’ll try to make our norms be suitable to each member.

**Hints for Handling Difficult Behavior**

The problems in a team may due to lack of communication, or because of his or her behavior. Therefore, we need to prepare solutions to tackle this problem in case the problems become serious. There are several ways of handling difficult behavior as shown below.

1. The first type of such behavior is Overly Talkative. In this case the person might be

keep talking all time through the meeting because of too much enthusiasm, or trying to show off, or can’t wait to present idea. To deal with this behavior, other members can make a kind joke to such behavior to potentially notify him or her should leave some time for others’ ideas. Or if the person still takes the domination of the discuss and ignores the kind joke. A member should talk with the person about the norms we all follow in a private situation. Of course, the member should kindly show that we appreciate what the person did and tell the person what a good team need is fair chance to present their ideas.

1. The second type of difficult behavior is Too Quiet. Such person might be uninvolved

into the activities. To change this situation, other members should actively invite this person to show his or her idea about what has been discussed. And then others would tell the person that his or her opinion is very important to our team as well. Or other members can deliver their speech in a more interesting way.

1. The third type of such behavior is Argues. To deal with this, there are also several

situations. If the person is critical to ideas or processes, then the person can present his or her own thoughts. And other members can then reevaluate the ideas or the processes in the person’s way to check if the ideas really have problem. If the person is critical to another member, other members should tell the person how important of a peace atmosphere for a good team. And this person should talk the reasons. Only when the problem become explicit can it be solved.

1. The final behavior might be a problem is Complains. For this problem, the team

should firstly listen carefully to the person’s complaint. If the problem of complaint is reasonable and not be noticed by other members, others should be thankful to the person. Or if the compliant is unreasonable. Then the person would be told in a kind way that the major thing we should learn from this class is to learn how to corporate in a team.

**Hints for Handling Group Problems**

To develop the project more efficiently, the group should work as an entity instead of working individually. As time goes by, some problems may show up and must be solved as soon as possible. The followings are some typical problems and tips that help to make a team better.

1. Floundering

People tend to only know how other member works instead of knowing the job

details. Thus, to draw up a list of tasks can help improve this. Then other member has a whole view of what others’ job are and then help themselves to refine their work.

1. Going Off on Digressions and Tangents

Sometimes group members might be stuck in something that is unrelated to the work

they need to do at once. To avoid the serious consequence of this problem, some other member who has noticed this need to help the team go back to the work.

1. Making a Decision Too Quickly

To make a decision too quickly is always very harmful to team projects. Some

members might be too impatient to make a good decision. Therefore, before making the decision, all works that related to making such decision has to be fine completed. This will need every member check their own work to see if they are already completed their own work and is ready to make such decision.

1. Not Making a Decision

Apart from making decision too quickly, not making a decision is also a big problem.

Since we are dealing with team work, one person’s opinion is sometimes not that important comparing with the consensus. Because a single person’s ability is limited, and some small problems can only be found by the team as a whole. Thus, to be fair there will be a multi-voting when there’s some different ideas. Each member who own those ideas will present the advantages of the ideas, then after the vote there will be a consensus.

1. Feuding Between Group Members

A conflict or feud will definitely harm to the team and other members. A

good way to solve this is the team group together and let the persons who have conflict present their reason. Usually once the essential part of the conflict shows up, the conflict can be resolved.

Charlie who is in our team used to work in a software development group. At first the team worked well as they all expected. But somehow from one day, he never saw two members show up at the meeting. And after asking one of them he knew that the one he asked has conflict with the other one. To make this team become alive, Charlie asked those two people sits together in front of other members to talk about what their conflict is. After that, the problem has been resolved and then the project was developed in time.

1. Ignoring or Ridiculing Others

Team members might form factions or subgroups which is not helpful to complete a

team work. As who will finally work in the real word, we all need to have the ability of working with people we don’t familiar with and. So we all need to try our best to work with other group member.

1. The Group Member Who Does Not Do His/Her Share of the Work

Cooperation is also what we should learn from the team work. Since we are in one

group, each member will have a great effect on the team based on his or her work. Therefore, if a

person works unwilling to his or her job, other member should talk to the person and let the person know how important his or her job is.