

FIT1049: IT professional practice

Week 6: Teamwork and professional behaviours



Three weeks in three points... (Weeks 4-6)

As you move from presentations, meetings and teamwork...

1. You lose the relative degree of control over your communications.
2. You have to deal with an increasing number of variables, degree of spontaneity, and unknowns.
3. You also have less to ground upon your expectations.

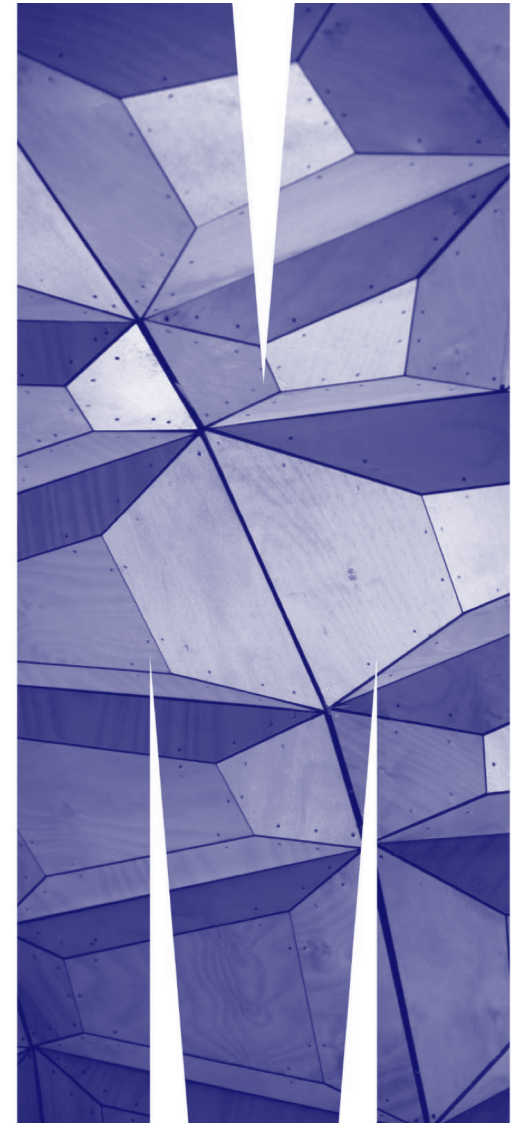
Things to cover today...

At the end of this lecture, you will broadly understand:

1. Recognise the elements that make an effective team, as well as common issues and how to respond to them; and
2. Understand what constitutes professionally unacceptable behaviours, and how to respond to such instances.

FIT1049: IT professional practice

Week 6 (alt.): How can you make
the team work?

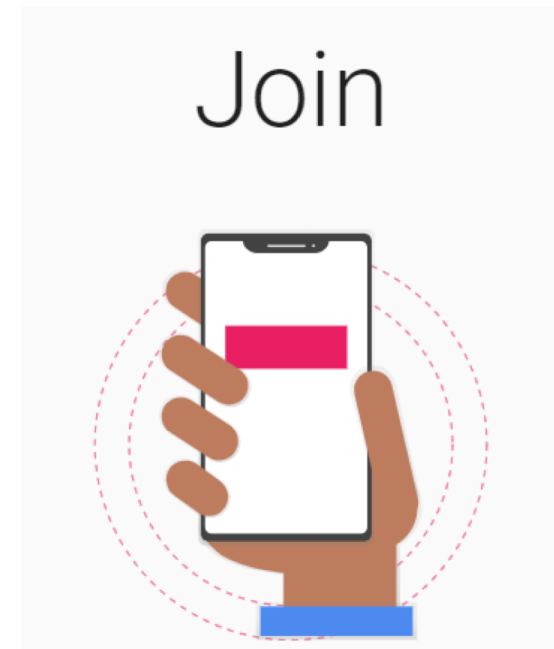


Get ready with FLUX...

Please head to **<https://flux.qa>** and sign in with your Monash account (you should then stay logged in for the semester).

Hit the plus button in the top right and type in code **8JQJ4J** to join the FIT1049 group. The code is case sensitive.

*Please note that this is a Monash system, and your responses to questions are not anonymous.



Question 1: Definition of a team

Which one of the following scenarios makes a team?

1. People queuing for a bus at the bus stop;
2. The same people queuing for a bus helping each other to save someone who just collapsed at the bus stop while waiting for the ambulance to arrive; or
3. A group of first aid officers working for the bus company being sent to the bus stop to manage the situation.

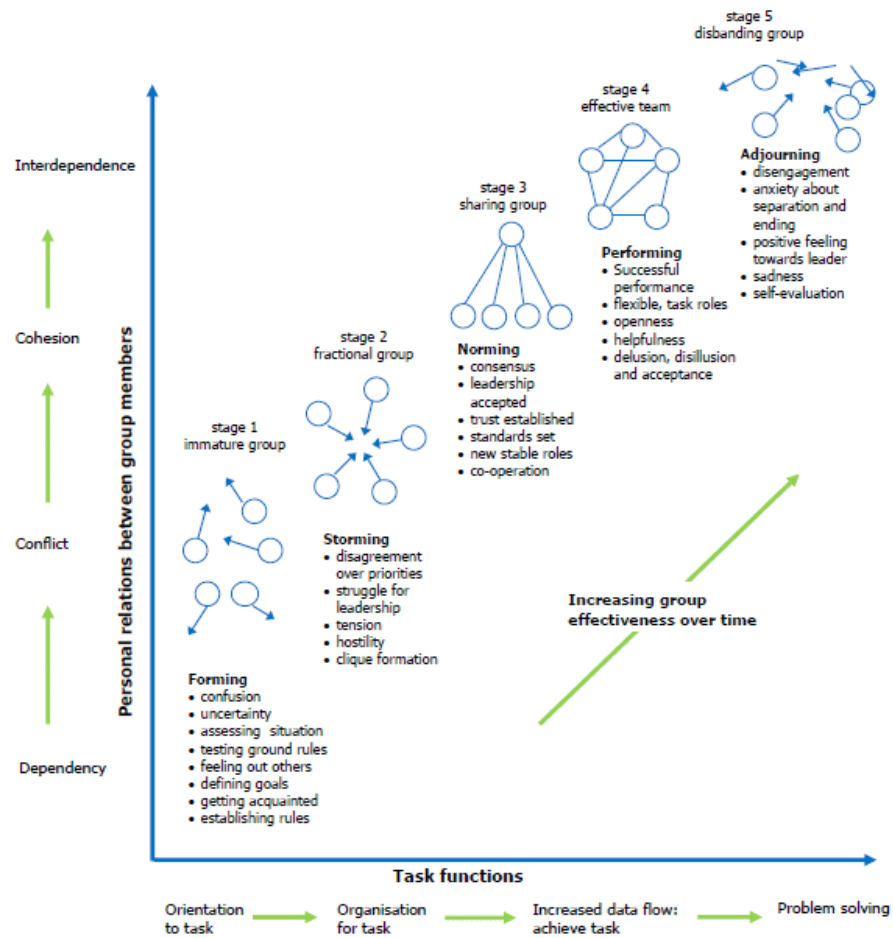
Four (4) key ingredients of a team

1. Structure
2. Purpose
3. Roles
4. Context

Question 2: Formation of a team

You and your colleagues (3 of them) are working as a team to review your company's website for its refresh. You are the only web designer, while others are from different sections of the company, i.e. marketing, sales and finance. It is a third meeting, 2 weeks into what is supposed to be a 2 months project, and you are starting to realise that everyone in the team has different expectations about how the review should take place. What's going on?

1. The team is in the forming stage, and it is only normal that different perspectives collide as the team forms itself;
2. The team is in the storming stage, and there needs to be some leadership to bring the team to the performing stage; or
3. The team is indeed in the performing stage, and that is why you start seeing other people's expectations more clearly.

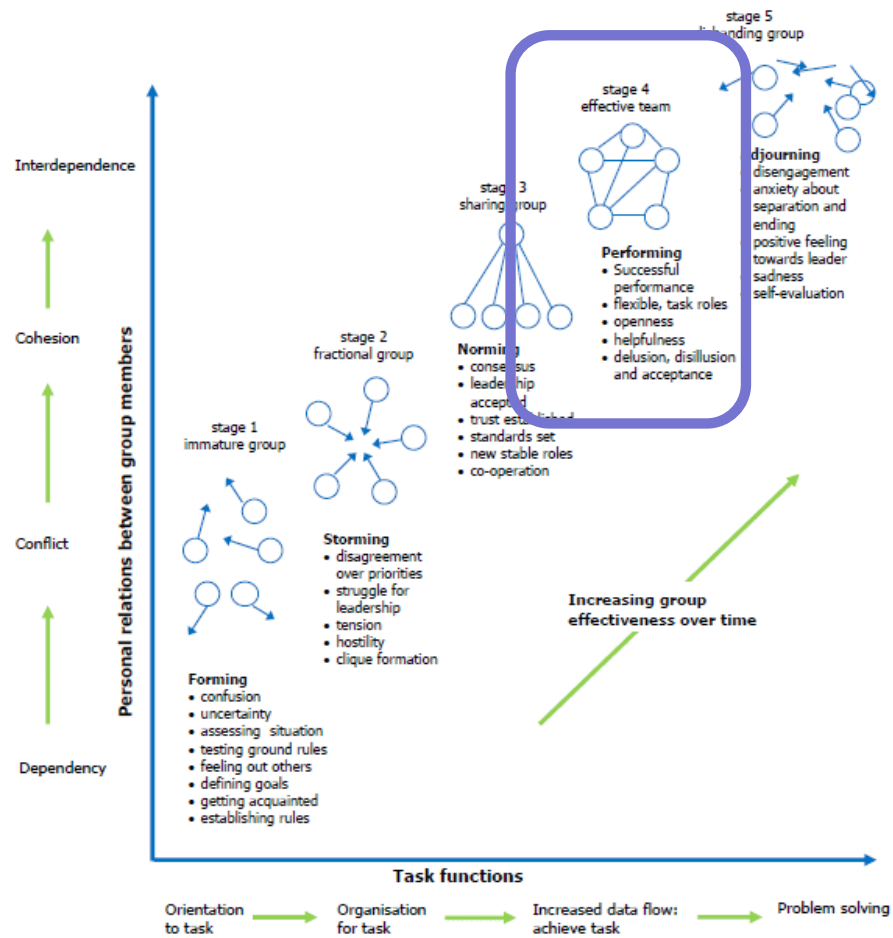


(Cullen & Calitz, 2015)

Question 3: Composition of the team

You are joining the company's sales team for 3 months to implement a new business system. The team understand that your work won't result in restructuring of the team (i.e. no one will be made redundant), but there seems to be some tension between one of the team members (who has been working there longest, for 15 years) and the manager (who has only worked there for 6 months) about how this implementation should take place. There are 8 other team members within the team, who have been rather quiet and seem to follow the aforementioned team member with the experience. Which one of the following is the least likely risk in this situation?

1. Diffused leadership;
2. Groupthink; or
3. Prolonged stage of 'storming'.



(Cullen & Calitz, 2015)

Question 4: Leadership and management

Which one of the following actions is beyond the parameter of 'leadership' as such?

1. You decide to deploy one of the team members to an area where you think would be more suited to his previous expertise and experience;
2. You take part of forming a group of early career professionals in your company without being told to do so; or
3. You conduct a task at the instruction of your manager and maximise the business impacts of the outcomes of the task assigned.

Question 5: Leadership styles

Catherine has always been shy, and has always been a 'quiet one'. She eventually found a way to be assertive in a team by focusing on her technical expertise, and also used very much her ability to see through how different technical expertise fit together for a common goal (e.g. a project). She found herself naturally inclined to a democratic style of leadership where she listens to others and make decisions based on the team's consensus. Now she is deployed for a 2 weeks project with a team where no one contributes actively because they are either too shy or 'busy'. What should she do?

1. Stick to her democratic leadership style while encouraging the team to be more participatory;
2. Change her leadership style to be bureaucratic with some 'formal rules' (e.g. set routines and protocols); or
3. Change her personality to be more autocratic if not charismatic.

Question 6: Assessment of the team #1

You have a team of five (5) with low power concentration and weak leadership within. What would be an effective strategy to lead this team while avoiding 'groupthink'?

Question 7: Assessment of the team #2

You are joining as Project Manager a well-established team of eight (8) with two influential members within. List two strategies you can use to lead this team effectively.

Question 8: Teamwork and communications

You are working with a team of 30 from a range of functional areas (such as IT, HR, Finance and Consulting) on an in-house project to develop and implement a new HR system. Your company has its presence in thirteen countries across the globe, so it is inevitable that you have to work with some of the team members virtually across different time zones with different languages. In light of the likely risk of conflating the communications amongst the team, which of the following is not a potentially effective strategy?

1. Have a set of highly structured meetings regularly to promote communications across team members;
2. Have a Facebook page for the team so that team members can share the information easily; or
3. Have an organisational structure within the team itself to reinforce the role of each member.

Question 9: Assertiveness skills

There are situations where a 'threat' as an assertive verbal technique to persuade the other is potentially effective. Which of the following would be an acceptable form of 'threat' in a professional context?

1. "The report was due last week, and we still have not received a copy from you. *If we do not receive it by the end of today, we'll miss the timing and will have to discuss with the manager.*"
2. "The report was due last week, and we still have not received a copy from you. *If we do not receive it by the end of today, I think I'll have to speak to the manager.*"
3. "The report was due last week, and we still have not received a copy from you. *If we do not receive it by the end of today, I don't think I'll include you in the next project.*"

Question 10: Questions

Let's continue with the last question's scenario. You, reluctantly yet nevertheless, agreed that you will wait for your colleague to produce the report by tomorrow. The colleague seems still a bit uncertain about this, and you wish to further probe to make sure that this will actually happen. What would be a potentially effective question to ask?

1. "Are you REALLY REALLY sure that you can do it? Hope so!"
2. "What do you think are the reasons for this delay so far? I really want to help you, but need to know what I can actually do to help."
3. "Do you actually think if you could finish this by tomorrow? Things happen, but you really need to tell me if you cannot. We'll think of something if that's the case."

Question 11a: Listening skills

Assume that your manager asked you and your colleague at a very short notice to deliver a set of data that is rather time-consuming to generate. Due to other tasks you and your colleague are undertaking at the same manager's instruction, you two can only do the suggested task by tomorrow, but your manager wants it today.

Your colleague is clearly not comfortable and visibly stressed, and started to tell you how difficult the situation is. How would you respond to this situation?

Question 11b: Listening skills

It's been already twenty minutes since this colleague's monologue started to turn into a bit of rant. How would you respond to this situation?

Question 11c: Listening skills

How would you also seek a workable compromise with your colleague and the manager in this instance?

Question 12: Feedback (by definition)

Which of the following could be considered 'feedback' to your colleague's presentation?

1. "That was TERRIBLE! Why did you even do that? I don't want to upset you, but I tell you anyway because I should really be honest as a colleague."
2. "That was VERY VERY good! Having said, though, I think you should have done the other way around for this. See? This part is not working properly."
3. "Well, if you work on this part further, and that would make an overall improvement to the final deliverable, I reckon."

Question 13a: Feedback

Assume that Alex, your junior colleague, has been untypically late for work for three out of the last 10 days. He also missed a meeting without notice, and this resulted in Alex getting the requirements of his task wrong, wasting 2 days of coding time.

Alex has been at the company for 3 years, and is considered a brilliant programmer by his colleagues. He is usually on time for everything, though he does not socialize much with his colleagues, e.g., eating lunch with the other people in the company.

How would you approach this situation? List two of the actions you might consider taking to make the situation better for all involved in this scenario.

Question 13b: Feedback

You finally got a chance to speak to Alex, and he clearly did not see this coming, especially from you. He is visibly annoyed, and started to respond to you in an aggressive manner. What would you do?

Question 13c: Feedback

In the same evening, you came home all so exhausted. You feel rather unresolved about Alex, and all this sort of hurts too. What would you do?

Teamwork is part of the (professional) reality...

...it's all up to you and how you make most of it.

Question 14: Issues in teamwork

You are managing a project as Project Manager, and noticed that one of the team members, Simon, has been not able to meet the past two deadlines, resulting in a delay of the team's progress as a whole. Simon does not report to you outside the project, and he is more junior than you in the organisation. What would be the first step for you to address this specific team issue?

1. You discretely speak to Jane, who is Simon's line manager, and ask her to speak to Simon about the issue;
2. You speak to the sponsor of the project to discuss the delay, and raise this with other team members however without specifically referring to Simon;
or
3. You discretely speak to Simon to see if you could help.

Question 16: Escalation

Consider the same scenario. Over the last two weeks or so, another team member, who has not been happy with his role in the team, has been rather blunt, if not aggressive, towards you. You do not know why he adapts such a mannerism, but this afternoon this staff member was so aggressive, you had to remind him that his behaviours were threatening and inappropriate. What would your next step be?

1. Contact HR and your line manager to report the incident;
2. Arrange a meeting with this staff member to discuss his behaviours; or
3. Give the staff member another chance since this was the first time you felt threatened.

Question 15: Conflict resolution

One day you arrived at your office, and your close and equal team members, Kim and Peter, were having an argument over the ways the project should proceed. No one else was in the office, and both were rather emotional but not abusive to each other, though their tone of voice does make you feel uncomfortable. The argument sort of ended as you entered the room, but later Kim told you that such an argument happens fairly regularly, and that he feels he is being bullied. What would you do first?

1. Speak to Peter on Kim's behalf in the presence of both Kim and Peter;
2. Discretely speak to your team's manager about the situation; or
3. Encourage Kim to speak to the manager.

Question 17: Unacceptable behaviours

Sam is a Business Analyst at a large consulting firm, recently being deployed to a client organisation that is a bank. One day Sam mistakenly forgot to submit a report on behalf of the team; he and his team completed it, but he forgot to send it to the clients by the deadline. The clients were not able to present the report to their stakeholders, and are now demanding some explanations from Sam's team and organisation for the damage this mistake incurred by failing to present this report on time. Which one of the following is professionally unacceptable behaviours?

1. The clients pointing out to Sam in the presence of his team how much damage the mistake incurred to their organisation.
2. Sam's manager demanding further explanations from Sam on how this happened and what Sam would do in response.
3. Sam's team sending an email to Sam's manager detailing the mistake Sam made.


Why does it matter?

*It's not just for you, your immediate colleagues
and friends, but...*

*also for the sake of your professional
and social responsibilities.*

Things to do this week...

1. Make sure you shared your eFolio and all the submission items up to the Week 5 tutorial.
2. Read the Moodle Books to date. Week 8 reading will be available during the mid-semester break



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◀ Week 6 (8 Apr - 14 Apr) **Week 7 (15 Apr - 21 Apr)** Break (22 Apr - 28 Apr) ▶

Teamwork and professional behaviours (cont'd)

Following the Week 6 reading material and the lecture, we will continue discussing the topic of teamwork and professional behaviours in this week's tutorial, where you will be allocated to a team with whom you will be working on Assignment 2 for the rest of the semester in this unit.


The tutorial session this week will also provide you an opportunity to familiarise yourself with the team, and we will also discuss the Assignment 2 and its requirements in detail.

Pre-class activity: Something to read

In light of the cancellation of the lecture this week (due to the Good Friday Public Holiday on Friday the 19th April), there is no reading for this week. We will however upload during the mid-semester break a Moodle Book on the topic of professional ethics and legal issues for IT professionals; please read it before attending the tutorial in Week 8.

Tutorial: Something to do

Please find below the tutorial sheet for this week, in which you will find an overview, learning outcomes as well as instructions for the activities to be conducted during the tutorial. While your tutors will go through these, it would be useful if you have a look at this document prior to attending the tutorial.

 [Week 7 tutorial sheet](#)
38.4KB Word 2007 document

Lecture: Something to think about

Please note that the lecture this week has been cancelled due to the Good Friday Public Holiday on Friday the 19th April 2019.

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