



Department of Informatics

INF 315

Total marks = 60

Duration: 48 hours

Lecturers: Dr Riana Steyn and Prof Tendani Mawela

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Instructions

1. Read the case studies carefully
2. This assignment consists of **6 questions of 10 marks** each. Answer **all** the questions.
3. Plagiarism will be checked, we will allow a **15% tolerance**, anything more than 15% (excluding cover page and headings) will receive a zero for this assignment and you will be reported to the disciplinary committee.
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5. Upload your completed assignment in .pdf format in the TurnITIn link on ClickUP
6. No late assignments will be accepted. Please make sure you leave yourself enough time to submit your assignment on time.

Case Study #1

Final year students enrolled in the Interactive Multimedia course at Edith Cowan University are required to develop skills and expertise in managing the design and development of client web sites. The module IMM 3228/4228 – “Project Management Methodologies”, uses teams of four or five students to utilise their specialist skills to meet a “real need” for an industry client. Team roles include programmers, graphic designers and project managers. There were 82 students (20 teams) completing this unit. The aim was to have students experience project management issues that occur when dealing with “real” clients in “real” projects and was heavily focused on teamwork and problem solving. The environment was based on the learning principles of authenticity, self-regulation and reflection (Luca & Oliver, 2001).

Features included student contracts, journals (for self/peer assessment & reflection), “Conference Centre” for problem solving, bulletin boards, time management tools, syllabus and assessment materials, lecture notes, legal/QA templates, relevant URL’s, web sites and assignments developed by previous students and a student details database. Within this setting, two teams were selected for investigation. One team was highly successful in developing a quality product, and collaborated in a highly successful manner. Another team, experienced severe team problems, which caused it to become dysfunctional and had to be split. Data was collected on both of these teams from focus groups sessions, interviews and questionnaires that were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Successful Team

This team of students was highly successful in developing a quality product, as well as being highly collaborative. Their journal entries continually reflected positive comments about other team members, and at no stage during the semester was there a request or requirement to transfer marks from one team member to another. Team meetings were always friendly, and at no stage were team issues discussed as being problematic. The team always focused on the project and how the process of development could be improved by exploring expectations of the tutor, client and end users. An analysis of the data collected from this team indicated that they showed the attributes needed for successful teamwork.

Unsuccessful Team

Another team of students experienced severe team problems, which caused it to become dysfunctional and had to be split. At the first peer assessment session, marks were transferred between team members, as it was perceived that some team members weren’t contributing. Even though agreement was made at this meeting that marks should be transferred, and suggestions were made about how to improve the situation, resentment amongst team members escalated. This was clearly evident from the comments being made through the confidential on-line journal entries each week. The project manager tried keeping the team together, to restore the team’s culture, but during these intervention sessions [3 in total], only half of the team ever attended, never the same 3 though. The tutor had several meetings with the project manager and individuals to help try to resolve issues, but to no avail. At one of the team meetings a serious disagreement occurred, in which one of the team members verbally berated another, from which point there was no reconciliation. After this altercation, team members felt they could no longer work together, so even though they would experience a heavier workload, they unanimously agreed to split and form two separate teams.

Case Study #2

Barry is a 27-year old who is a foodservice manager at a casual dining restaurant. Barry is responsible for supervising and managing all employees in the back of the house. Employees working in the back of the house range in age from 16 years old to 55 years old. In addition, the employees come from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. For many, English is not their primary language.

Barry is ServSafe® certified and tries his best to keep up with food safety issues in the kitchen but he admits it's not easy. Employees receive "on the job training" about food safety basics (for example, appropriate hygiene and hand washing, time/temperature, and cleaning and sanitizing). But with high turnover of employees, training is often rushed and some new employees are put right into the job without training if it is a busy day. Eventually, most employees get some kind of food safety training. Due to the many ovens and grill plates, the back of the restaurant tends to get unbearably hot and this affects the employee's productivity. The owners of the restaurant are supportive of Barry in his food safety efforts because they know if a food safety outbreak were ever linked to their restaurant; it would likely put them out of business. Still, the owners note there are additional costs for training and making sure food is handled safely.

One day Barry comes to work and is rather upset even before he steps into the restaurant. Things haven't been going well at home and he was lucky to rummage through some of the dirty laundry and find a relatively clean outfit to wear for work. He admits he needs a haircut and a good hand scrubbing, especially after working on his car last evening. When he walks into the kitchen he notices several trays of uncooked meat sitting out in the kitchen area. It appears these have been sitting at room temperature for quite some time. Barry is frustrated and doesn't know what to do. He feels like he is beating his head against a brick wall when it comes to getting employees to practice food safety.

Barry has taken many efforts to get employees to be safe in how they handle food. He has huge signs posted all over the kitchen with these words: KEEP HOT FOOD HOT AND COLD FOOD COLD and WASH YOUR HANDS ALWAYS AND OFTEN. All employees are given a thermometer when they start so that they can check the temperature of the food. Hand sinks, soap, and paper towels are available for employees so that they are encouraged to wash their hands frequently.

Question 1 (10 Marks):

This question is based on Case Study #1

Clearly there were many communication barriers in the unsuccessful team. During one of the interventions sessions held by the Project manager, someone mentioned that perhaps a better intervention to overcome the group issues, is to assist all the team members to become better team players. Recommend and discuss how you would implement a communication strategy to become better team members, for the entire team before the team decides to split up.

Question 2 (10 Marks):

This question is based on Case Study #1

- a) Use the theory on team conflict to describe the conflict which took place in the **unsuccessful** team. [5 marks]
- b) What could lead to emotional conflicts in a team? How could potential conflicts related to emotionality in a project team be effectively and efficiently handled? Give three practical examples. [5 marks]

Question 3 (10 Marks):

This question is based on Case Study #2

Identify and discuss Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cultural value dimensions at play in case study #2. Also indicate some strategies which Barry can use to find a way to work well with the team

Question 4 (10 Marks):

This question is based on Case Study #2

One strategy to change a team's dynamics, is by motivating the team. Suggest a strategy Barry might use, highlighting 5 points to motivate the team to follow safe food handling practices?

Question 5 (10 Marks):

You are the project manager on a highly strategic project and the project owner holds you responsible for delivering on time, within cost and budget. As it is a strategic project in a politicised environment many stakeholders with a personal interest and power want to influence the project time lines and expenditure. Scope creep is starting to happen and you are struggling with resources and lacking in competent team members. This might cost you your job.

How are you going to manage the push and pull between principles of time, cost, quality, relationships and focus of scope?

Question 6 (10 Marks):

This question is based on Case Study #1

- a) Write a brief evaluation report on the team dynamics of the unsuccessful team. [4]
- b) Based on what you've learned about team dynamics in this course, set up a specific intervention plan which could have been used to improve the team dynamics of the unsuccessful team. [6]