



FIT 3161 – FIT 3163

CS – DS, Software Project

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Part 2: Team Work and Challenges
Week 1
Semester 2, 2023

Introduction

- We will look at some issues and challenges in relation to Team Work.
- Why works as a Team?
- Common challenges and issues

Why work as a Team?

- Task cannot be completed by 1 person and beyond ability of 1 person
- One person does not have the required skill and knowledge (Not expert)
- Someone may be better at a task than someone else
- Share experience and knowledge, bring new knowledge
- Team members can support each other, professionally and personally
- Reliability: A Team is more reliable than one single individual
- <https://www.atlassian.com/blog/teamwork/the-importance-of-teamwork>

Good Team :

Build a common **Universe of Discourse (UoD)**

UoD: "... complete range of objects, events, attributes, relations, ideas, etc, that are expressed, assumed, or implied in a discussion"

In simple terms: " ... **talking about the same things that mean the same thing to everyone**"

**Do not assume that everyone necessarily understands what you are saying.
Confirm that you have been correctly understood.**

Wrong Expectation from other → Blame shifting ← Not good

Team Work v/s Group Work

Not the same ...

How are they different ?

Example : lets build a brick wall 30 m long, 3 workers!

Group: each worker builds 10 m independently, and does all the work for each 10 m segment.

Team: All work together to do different tasks:

P1: carries all the material to the build site.

P2: mixes the mortar and carries to build spot.

P3: lays the bricks. P1 helps

Outcome:

Group: *No dependency between workers
likely quality inconsistency in each part of wall
eg: different spacing between bricks may show
They may not all work at the same pace.*

Team: *each worker depends on each other
each does what they are best at
each can check and help each other: better quality
Communication and coordination is crucial*

Differences in Work based Team v/s Student Team : Dynamics

- **Work organisation team:**
 - Team has a hierarchy : Team Leader, Team members and structure and
 - Pre-determined by the organisation (higher level management)
 - Hierarchy (influence) and “Authority” is respected
- **University Student team:**
 - No hierarchy to start with: no clear structure
 - Either flat structure or “appoint” a Team Leader (rotation?)
 - However: no pre-determined “authority” by a Leader
 - “Leader” (if selected) need to:
 - Coordinate and Facilitate (but does not instruct or dictate)
 - Manage communication
 - Monitor Team Health and Progress
 - May delegate

Team Challenges:

- 1) Team not communicating and not sharing information effectively
- 2) Lack of transparency (no explanation for action)
- 3) Work in silos (in isolation – specially a problem when mostly OnLine)
 - Also seen as Group work v/s Team work
- 4) No long term thinking, no shared team vision (*)
- 5) Not going in the same direction or taking incompatible directions
- 6) Lack or loss of trust in leader/member or organisation or vision

Team Challenges (contd):

- 7) **Conflict of interest** between team members
- 8) Not taking **responsibility** and not delivering as expected with no reason
- 9) Low engagement of team member: no sense of **ownership**
- 10) **Disagreement and tension between** Members: Poor or no communication
- 11) Difficulty addressing issues and manage **necessary/difficult** changes
- 12) -----→ **Team collapse**

Team Challenges (contd):

Understand Individual Expectation and Approach:

Early Action: Plan and start Early - seen as Leading

- + Usually less stressful. (can also mean too casual)
- + Sense of control
- + Time to review and refine
- But difficult to adapt to late external changes: less flexible?

Late Action: Start and act only when one has to (closer to deadline)

- Can be more stressful and “feel pressured” (+ more focused!)
- Often results in missing deadline
- Less time to refine
- + Can use time to catch other opportunities
- + Can incorporate late external changes : more flexible



Team Challenges (contd):

Individual Expectation and Approach (contd): People work differently

**Early Action: Plan and start Early - seen as Leading
v/s**

Late Action: Start and act only when one has to (closer to deadline)

Team Members (specially Leader)

- Understand that everyone works differently
- Incorporate this in your task allocation and scheduling
- Manage : support “late action” when necessary
- Manage as a risk and have contingency plan (plan B)

Team Challenges (contd):

Conflict and Conflict Resolution

Team will have conflict : disagreement / different approach

1) Technical and Problem specific: (personally detached)

- Adopt a constructive approach to resolution: identify solutions
- Discuss merit of different solutions, pros and cons and decide.
- Possible to “experiment” and select “best” solution, time permitting
- Resolved by adopting a particular (technical) solution

Conflict and Conflict Resolution

2) Misunderstanding:

- Team Members have different understanding, because
 - ➔ Poor communication
 - ➔ Pre-conception or previous experience
 - ➔ Invalid assumptions are made
- Seek some confirmation **that you have been understood**
- **OR you understood correctly**
- Allow each Team Member to engage in discussion: use technology.
- Maintain **written documentation** with shared access.

Conflict and Conflict Resolution

3) Personal disagreement: can be harder to resolve

- Different expectation from Members/Conflict of interest
- **Ensure task allocation matches ability of Member to carry out the task successfully.**
- Address potential difficulty that may be encountered: e.g need time for (self) training, deal with skill mismatch
- Assist and collaborate
- Accept “failures” will occur from time to time
- Consider different approach to work by other (e.g,Early/Late)

Conflict and Conflict Resolution

4) Adopt Formal Process for Conflict Resolution (and minimisation)

- Regular Meeting with minutes taken (appoint a minute taker)(consider using audio/video recording)
- Agree on a formal conflict resolution process
 - ➔ Eg: Voting mechanism Or Authority to someone to decide / umpire
- Genuine attempt to resolve issue first and then only escalate to Teaching Team
- Share responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions

Process of conflict resolution

- a) Set a time to discuss issue agreeable to all
 - i) Invite a 3rd independent party if necessary, who may moderate process
- b) Identify the main issue(s)
- c) Identify common goals
- d) Identify options to meet goals
- e) Analyse pros and cons of options
- f) Agree on solution with possible compromise and implement solution
- g) Monitor implementation of solution
- h) When resolved, acknowledge contribution of all and reconcile