

[16] Hello. This is Vicki Steiner again with San Jose State University. Welcome to Part Two of our three-part recording on teamwork. In this part of the presentation, our focus will be on some of the common fears of and problems in teamwork. Special attention will be given to obstacles that can arise in online teamwork.

[17] First, let us talk about some common perceptions about teamwork. In a survey of my INFO 203 students, the most common fear our students expressed regarding teamwork is lack of control or having one's grade being at the mercy of others. Others stem from different interpretations of an assignment, different work patterns, such as morning or evening, finishing work early or procrastinating, and not being responsive to online communication.

As a side note, I should note that I shared several of these concerns reflected on this slide when I was pursuing my library degree. By the end of my tenure as a student in the program, however, I had come to regard my teamwork experiences as some of the best I had in the program. Moreover, in the years that have passed since I graduated from the program, the skills I obtained in participating in online teamwork have proven to be invaluable in my work with professional library associations, with departments and campuses within my university, and in my teaching. I truly hope that you will come to feel the same way.

[18] Now, let us consider some common problematic types of teamwork participants. As noted in several of the responses reflected in the previous slide, many fears about teamwork stem from issues that arise because of certain personality characteristics. This includes the free rider or the social loafer, which is a team member who deliberately does not contribute, relies on teammates to complete all assigned tasks, yet reaps the benefit of the team grade.

I should note, however, that what is perceived as free-riding can be behavior driven by a team member's feeling uncertain about a task or not being capable of completing tasks. Thus, the non-contributing behavior is a matter of lacking confidence rather than interest in teamwork. We will discuss later how an effective leader of a team can help distinguish between a free-rider and a student who is struggling. The problem of free-riding versus struggling students can be particularly true of students who have insecurity about their communication skills or technological proficiency, so those things should be considered as you are getting to know your teammates in an assignment.

The second type of problematic participant is the overbearing teammate. This is a teammate who usually is a very highly-functioning student whose capability and extent of contribution may lead to an increased sense of ownership over the team project. This may be accompanied by a tendency to not trust in the ability of other members. This increased sense of ownership can also be accompanied by assertiveness and domination

of team meetings, which, in turn, may deter other teammates' participation, making them more inclined to defer to the overbearing teammate, rather than express their own views about the work of the team, which truly would be unfortunate.

The third potentially problematic participant is the lone wolf. The lone wolf is an individual who prefers to work alone when making decisions and completing assignments. I suspect that many people might group themselves in this category. In fact, I did so when I first started in the program. The issue with the lone wolf though is while the individual is goal-driven, hardworking, and highly committed to excellence, the lone wolf can nonetheless adversely impact the work of a team by prioritization of individual over organizational objectives. The lone wolf can also have a lack of patience for working with others, and a lack of interest in developing the trusting relationships needed for effective teaming. Later in this part of the presentation, we will consider some of the ways to deal with these interpersonal conflicts.

I will note at this point, though, that you should bear in mind that dealing with, rather than resigning yourself to enduring such interpersonal conflicts, is an important component of effective teaming. Negative team experiences tend to create negative attitudes toward teamwork in general, which not only undermines the team itself, but also often carries over into other contexts involving collaborative projects, such as when you engage in these types of projects in the workplace.

[19] A few other problems that can arise or be magnified in online teamwork include logistical problems, technology problems, and communication problems. Let us consider these in turn.

Logistical problems can involve things such as the task of coordinating schedules for meetings considering time zone differences. We review some tools to overcome this obstacle in Module 5's assigned material in our Canvas course site.

Another category is technological problems, such as overcoming varying proficiencies with technology, service disruptions and internet outages, and equipment failure. Now, being a fully online program, these things can, of course, be frustrating, but it is important to understand, just as you would in the workplace, that these things invariably will occur, so the skill you need to develop in this regard is learning how to deal with such problems and how to overcome them.

Last, we have communication problems, and I would say this is the most common category of problems that arise in online teamwork. So, what do I mean by communication problems? This includes things that are not unique to online teamwork, but can be exacerbated by the lack of facial cues and body language available when using non-visual tech tools. Facial cues and body language can convey interpersonal

affectations, such as friendliness, attentiveness, and candor, all of which are critical for building trust. Use of a variety of tools for communication, such as webcams, can mitigate some of these issues. Because the foregoing problems can tend to go unaddressed longer in online teams, please be mindful of the potential problems and arm yourself with the tools needed to resolve them, so the problems do not significantly hinder the work of your team.

[20] Now, before we move past the issue of problems and fears in teamwork, it is very important to note that while fears about teamwork are commonly experienced by students, not all students dread the prospect of teamwork. In fact, a good number of students are quite positive about teamwork, based on both prior experiences in their education and in their workplace. I have reproduced one such comment here, which, which was shared by one of my former INFO 203 students.

Other students have similarly noted that they appreciate how online teamwork offers the opportunity to virtually socialize and meet others in the program, which can help lessen the feeling of being isolated in an entirely online learning environment, as well as afford the opportunity to share a workload and to brainstorm, resulting in what students felt were improved grades, a safe environment to learn how to be assertive and diplomatic, how to reach consensus or compromise, and how to build leadership skills.

In the literature on teams, studies have shown that positive expectations about teamwork are correlated to member satisfaction with teamwork. So, do bear that in mind as you think about teamwork and the prospect of teaming during your time in the program.

[21] In the next section in Part Two, we will identify some tips for success in teaming to help you have a positive experience with teamwork. Let us consider some of those strategies.

[22] Strategies for success in teamwork and leadership are amply covered in the extant literature in many disciplines. That said, I must say that one of the best, single-page illustrations of these strategies I have seen comes from the world of collegiate basketball from the late, great Coach John Wooden, by way of his well-known pyramid of success.

There is a wealth of information on this slide, but I would like to highlight just a few points that I believe are essential for productive teaming and team leadership. Let us talk about productive teaming. On the third level of the pyramid, Coach Wooden says, "Team Spirit: The star of the team is the team. We supersedes me." As noted in our discussion of the lone wolf, teamwork can run counter to the individualistic norms of some students who prefer to work alone. The impulse for lone wolves is to simply break

an assignment into individual tasks, and then have team members go their own separate ways to complete their respective tasks independently. Teamwork, however, is not mere task completion. It also is about process, which is quintessentially interdependent.

I also quite like the quote where Coach Wooden says, "Friendship: Strive to build a team filled with camaraderie and respect: comrades-in-arms." One of the most important tasks at the outset of teamwork is team building. Activities that aim to create a relaxed and friendly dynamic and cohesion in the team, which are important building blocks for establishing trust. In the literature on teamwork, studies have shown that students with a stronger feeling of connection and interaction with other students, or a sense of community, felt that they learned more from the collaborative activity than in other contexts.

Examples of teambuilding exercises include members of a team working together to do things like creating a team name, a team logo, a slogan, or novel ways of introducing themselves to each other, or engaging in icebreaker conversation.

I also like Point 5, at the bottom under the 12 Lessons in Leadership, where Coach Wooden says, "It takes 10 hands to make a basket." I think this is a great way of saying that when team members combine their individual talent, skills, and experiences, and work together via appropriate teaming principles, the result will be more effective than had they worked disparately.

On productive teaming, I would like to point out just a couple of more points that are in the Pyramid of Success. The first is "Cooperation: Have utmost concern for what's right rather than who's right." Conflicts in teamwork often arise during decision-making when individuals might defend their own views without seriously considering the views of others. This, of course, is a mistake. One of the best aspects of teamwork, particularly in online teamwork in which you will participate here in our program, is how it brings together a diverse group of people, with their own ideas and experiences. Viewing a problem through multiple perspectives often brings solutions that might not otherwise have been identified.

On the bottom, right of the pyramid, I quite like the quote, "Enthusiasm: Your energy and enjoyment, drive and dedication will stimulate and greatly inspire others." This is true in teamwork and in life in general, so it is a good concept to embrace.

Now let us focus on some of the qualities of productive leadership. We will talk about leadership in greater detail in the third and final part of this presentation, but let us consider some of the suggestions provided here in the Pyramid of Success. First, lesson

9 in the "12 Lessons in Leadership" perfectly captures what makes a great leader: "Makes greatness attainable by all."

[23] An effective team leader engages in power-building rather than power-wielding. Her style is active and democratic, and as such, actively helps her team develop self-management skills and ensures that each team member has an equal voice in the work of the team. Other important tasks and skills include coordinating team efforts, providing constructive feedback, facilitating decision-making processes, and mediating conflicts. More on this in a bit.

An effective leader will also monitor and continuously assess the effectiveness of her team and its progress. Questions to ask in making this assessment should include:

- Is the team knowledgeable about the way teams develop, such that they know what to expect as the team evolves?
- Are ground rules being followed?
- Are team members sharing information and construction feedback with each other?
- Is morale high?
- Are meetings handled efficiently?
- Is the process of, of decision-making working?
- Are all team members given an equal voice?
- How are conflicts being resolved?
- Are they being resolved productively?
- And, importantly, are milestones being celebrated?

Selection of a leader should be a thoughtful process and not just based on who volunteers for the job. I think a good starting point in this regard is to have team members, at the outset of the team being formed, share experiences that they have had with effective and ineffective leaders to identify those characteristics that will make a good leader. Thereafter, members should engage in an honest discussion about the personal skills that they bring to the table and whether they are compatible with effective leadership for the task assigned.

Another important aspect in terms of thinking about overcoming problems and fears in teamwork is understanding what are the important roles and responsibilities of team members. This involves at the outset of team formation, discussing things such as:

- What role will each team member serve?
- How will roles be determined?

When articulating roles and responsibilities, please make sure that both issues are clearly defined and identified at the outset of your collaboration with your teammates. At a minimum, each team should include a team leader who provides direction, facilitates meetings, ensures tasks are completed, ensures compliance with ground rules, and mediates conflict.

Each team should also have a scribe, or record keeper, who takes notes of meetings and reports to the team after meetings to summarize discussion. Also, you should have an editor on the team who reviews all team documents and deliverables, and ensures that style, grammar, and formatting are correct. It is also very helpful to ensure that each team has a techie, or a person who will serve as the tech-savvy member, who ensures that all team members can use technology tools effectively to complete work in a productive fashion. You should take good notes of these aspects, as these roles and responsibilities will play a role in the teamwork assignment that you will be required to complete as part of your work in Module 5 of INFO 203.

[24] The other important aspect to consider in terms of succeeding in teamwork are ground rules. Ground rules serve as the foundation for building effective teams, and should be established during the first team meeting, and reinforced in subsequent team meetings. Think of ground rules as a team contract that governs each team member and assures accountability.

The team contract should establish, at a minimum, governance norms and etiquette norms. You will see that I have articulated a few examples of concepts that fall into each of these categories. For example, in governance norms, we talked about roles. What role will each team member serve and how will roles be determined? In terms of work standards, you should talk about how work will be distributed, who will set deadlines, what will happen if a member does not fulfill his or her commitment, how work will be reviewed, the guidelines for the quality of work, what the processes for decision-making or reaching consensus, and identifying consequences for failing to adhere to ground roles.

Students often hesitate to articulate rules relating to consequences for failing to contribute to the team enterprise or to comply with team rules. This is a mistake, as articulation of consequences for non-participation can help ensure individual and team accountability. The ability to “enforce” consequences can vary, depending on how an instructor constructs a team assignment. If an instructor includes peer evaluations as part of the assignment, one consequence of non-participation could be a non-favorable peer evaluation, in which team members describe the non-participating member’s conduct and its impact on the team enterprise. If peer evaluations are not included, another consequence of non-participation could be the team seeking the intervention of the instructor to help resolve a conflict. This prospect alone could motivate a “loafing”

team member to contribute, for fear of an instructor being informed of the member's inadequate performance.

Team etiquette norms involves things like being mindful of others' schedules and their time, arriving on time, being responsible for organizing meetings and where they will be held, having a shared understanding of preferred methods of communication, time for responding to communication, and the process for providing feedback. The team should feel free to ask questions without being attacked or having their questions be looked upon negatively. We will return to the subject of ground rules again in Part Three of this presentation when we consider the forming stage of team development, but I encourage you to take notes on this subject, as the concept of ground rules will play an important part in the teamwork assignment that you will complete in Module 5 of INFO 203.

[25] Another one of Coach Wooden's great lessons in leadership states that adversity is your asset. When thinking about conflicts that arise in teamwork, it is important to understand that they are not failures. Conflicts are a normal part of the process of teaming and provide excellent opportunities to learn and improve team processes. When conflicts are not resolved quickly and effectively, the progression of the team is hindered.

There are three basic things that should be communicated in discussions of conflict, to ensure that the conversation is productive. I have illustrated those here, but the three parts are:

1. Identify the problem. In doing so, the focus should be on behavior, not people, lest the discussion be perceived as blame or as an attack.
2. The effect of the problem. Discussion of conflict must provide context so team members understand why certain behavior presents a problem or conflict and why addressing the behavior will benefit the team.
3. Possible solution. Discussion of possible solutions in the discussion ensures that criticism or feedback is constructive.

[26] Rounding out our discussion on thinking about resolving conflict, I want to talk a bit about how you frame the discussion of conflict. The discussion should involve a combination of pressure and support, and a couple of examples are shown here. An example of pressure in discussing conflict, in the first column here, refers to applying ground rules and consequences. For example, saying "I don't think we've heard from you, Sam, in two weeks. I'd be interested in your perspective on this." You can see how this would be a more productive way of addressing a problem with a student not being

in communication with the rest of the team for a bit of time. In the second column, we have an example of supportive discussion of conflict. Support in this context refers to acknowledging snags and offering temporary tradeoff or other options. An example here is for a member who is often late, you can say, for example, "When you're always late for a meeting, it makes me feel like my time is disrespected, that it's worth nothing. Would you consider making an effort to arrive on time, or should we consider changing the start time?"

Another important point in this context is that discussion should involve the team, openly, rather than take place in side bars. The ultimate objective, bear in mind, is to resolve conflicts in a way that will promote cohesion and cooperation. So, avoiding sidebars will go a long way in preventing the development of cliques, which can undermine the spirit of collaboration.

To give just one example, earlier we mentioned what to do when conflicts involve perceived free-riding. The issue of a free-rider, in reality, can involve a circumstance in which a student is struggling. The team leader, as an initial matter, should ascertain whether the teammate is struggling due to an educational circumstance or feeling like an outsider on the team, or if the teammate is truly and deliberately loafing or free-riding. If the behavior is actual free-riding, constructive ways to deal with the problem includes feedback about the effect of the behavior, reminders about mutually agreed deadlines and standards, implementation of additional progress deadlines, and a protocol for progress reporting. Deconstructive ways of dealing with free-riders include excluding the student from team activities and withdrawing feedback support from the student.

[27] In this, our second part of the presentation, we have discussed common fears and problems in teamwork, and how to address them to ensure that you succeed in your teamwork endeavors. In the third and final part of the recording, we will focus on stages of team development, which are important in understanding the work of a team and managing expectations of how the process will evolve. Please proceed to the third part of our recording.

END OF PART TWO OF RECORDING