Effective Teamwork

11.201 GATEWAY: Planning Action

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Lecture 1
Teamwork or groupwork provides

- The chance to practice skills of leadership--motivating others to learn, deliberate, and act or "produce";
- Incentives to improve self-management or "self-mastery."
- A chance to build community around the work we do in the Department
- A set of challenges for which we can all prepare …
Teams have two types of goals

- **TASK** ("getting things done"): Being specific, productive, attentive to what’s expected by the client or boss or constituents. “Delivering the goods.”

- **RELATIONSHIP** ("getting along"): Creating interpersonal dynamics that work
What “success” means

In good teams...

- Tasks get accomplished; and
- The satisfaction of team members is high
Typical team stages

1. **Forming** (becoming a group, introductions, basics)
2. **Norming** (establishing ground rules and working habits)
3. “**Storming**” (on task, agreeing and disagreeing)
4. **Performing** (Output: delivering the briefing, show, project, etc.)
Using disagreement

- Diversity of opinion and background can be a tremendous resource—a major source of innovation, for example—if managed well.
- Ineffective teams get anxious about disagreement and so converge on mediocre solutions that everyone can live with.
- Effective teams deliberate, invite opposing views, allocate time to develop risky ideas—but within the frame of a workplan, with deadlines, etc.
**Personal needs**

- **INCLUSION**: Info sharing, fairness, participation.
- **CONTROL**: No group can perform without it, but heavy-handed, myopic control undercuts performance, strains relationships.
- **AFFECTION** (Warmth or “affect”): encouragement, praise, cooperative spirit.

Source: Schnell, FIRO-B (2000)
Using different needs

- **Different team members contribute differently**— steering, mediating, encouraging, praising, adding comic relief, etc.

- **Know thyself**: Monitoring and managing your own needs as a key to self-management.

- **Know your limits**: Engage team members in compensating for your style (Impatient? Not engaged by details? Forget to appreciate others? Uncomfortable asserting boundaries/limits?)
Multiple intelligences

Two of the most critical:

- **Logical-mathematical** (analytic prowess): Thinking your way through tough material, reasoning logically.
- **Emotional**: Being able to perceive, assess, and influence your own emotions as well as those of other people.
Some advice (1 of 2)

1. Choose facilitators, who help the group use time well and actively engage members in discussion and work.

2. Get to know each other’s strengths, weaknesses, and style. Be candid, take risks.

3. Set ground rules and deadlines, and take time outs to check your process against them.

4. Discuss and “unpack” the task as an early focus of your work.
5. Divide and coordinate labor: Don’t just allocate, remember to coordinate.

6. Assembling the parts: Compose, practice, adjust, practice some more.

7. Present your work: You’ve worked hard, now do your best and don’t worry about what you can’t change or control.

8. Debrief and feedback: Use faculty and peer comments on your work, log some lessons for the future.
Group briefings: Reminders

- Set goals -- together
- Communicate early and often
- Use people’s strengths/talents
- Keep disagreements in perspective
- Factor in editing time
- When delivering, the group—everyone-- is always “on.” Be professional.
- Divide labor creatively for the briefing itself: Presenting and question answering roles, organizing the space and flow, running the technology, etc.