



Working in Groups

Course outline

Introduction



Working in Groups is an online course designed to help learners work more effectively in diverse groups and teams.

Each of the four components of the course includes an explanatory section on research perspectives, mini case studies, micro tasks designed around authentic examples of student teamwork, video clips of student reflections, and prompts to help learners reflect on questions about their own experience.

Through gaining insights into their own communication styles and enhancing their understanding of the ways culture can affect communication, learners will develop their professional communication skills for teamwork.

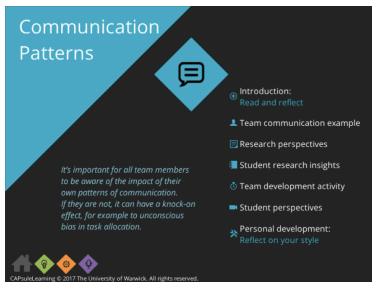
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Course structure: Core component 1

Communication patterns



Aims:

- To demonstrate the impact of personal perceptions and assumptions on effective communication
- To introduce different patterns of turn-taking in groups
- To help students participate more effectively when working in groups

Mini case study

- Bernie's experience of participating in meetings

Research insights

- Turn-taking in intercultural contexts
- Insight from a study of group interaction in a Statistics teamwork project

Team development activity

- Experiment with different styles of turn-taking in a group discussion

Student perspectives

- Video clips of our student researchers' different reactions to the turn-taking experiment and insights gained

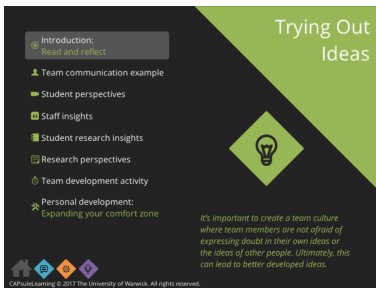
Personal development activity

- Reflect on your style: Personal communication patterns and preferences



Course structure: Core component 2

Trying out ideas



Aims:

- To understand the impact of different learning cultures on the process of groupwork
- To learn how to create space for good ideas to emerge
- To learn to appreciate and sensitively evaluate different ideas

Mini case study

- Justin's experience of mediating between group members at the ideas-sharing stage of a project

Research insights

- Risk-taking in intercultural contexts
- The impact of cultures of learning on sharing of ideas

Team development activity

- Activity to help students move out of their comfort zones re sharing ideas in mixed cultural groups

Student and staff perspectives

- Video clips of our student researchers' comments about the challenges of sharing ideas in groups
- A staff member's insight on facilitating the sharing of ideas

Personal development activity

- Reflect on your experience of classroom culture and levels of comfort in sharing ideas



Course structure: Core component 3

Work patterns



Aims:

- To learn how different attitudes to time have been theorised
- To appreciate and accept people's different working patterns
- To find ways of managing the work patterns of different group members

Mini case study

- Sid's experience of working in a team with a student from the year above

Research insights

- Attitudes to time – monochronic and polychronic
- Attitudes to time and the sequencing of tasks

Team development activity

- Consensus-building and decision-making activity with follow-up reflection

Student perspectives

- Video clips of our student researchers' different reactions to different working patterns among group members

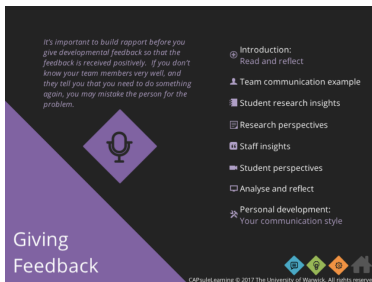
Personal development activity

- Reflect on your style: Working patterns and preferences



Course structure: Core component 4

Giving feedback



Aims:

- To understand why people may be more or less direct in saying what they think
- To gain insights into the potential impact of culture on this
- To learn some strategies for building rapport

Mini case study

- Joe's experience of leading a team and (not) getting feedback

Research insights

- The importance of building rapport early on
- The impact of different communication styles

Team development activity

- Analytical activity to help learners adjust their style in giving more sensitive feedback by email

Student perspectives

- Video clips of our student researchers' insights on giving and getting developmental feedback among group members

Personal development activity

- Reflect on your style: Personal preferences for giving and getting feedback

How can you use the online course?

The online course and its resources can be used in different ways depending on your particular goals as an instructor and the needs of your learners.

Facilitated blended learning: Online study with face-to-face workshops

Learners work through the online course and take part in complementary workshops. There is an introductory workshop that can be delivered to learners who are about to embark on a group project. (The same workshop can also be used with very few modifications to introduce the course to instructors.). Further workshop activities are provided for each of the course components and the instructor decides how and when to use/facilitate them.

If desired, learners can post their reflections on all aspects of the course to online forums, especially in response to prompts. The course can also be run successfully in virtual classrooms where technology permits instructors to see and hear what the learners are doing.

The workshop resources are made available to instructors who buy multiple licences of the course.

Independent learning

The course can also be used independently of an instructor, either with or without learners contributing their reflections to an online forum. The course includes built-in prompts for individual reflections on the various elements of the course.

Accompanying instructor's guide

The instructor's guide contains a range of supporting material to help you make the most of *Working in Groups*.

- Step-by-step instructions for facilitating the workshop activities
- Debriefing points and takeaways
- Guidance on developing learners' reflective skills in response to the online prompts
- Background research material to reinforce and extend your understanding of the core components of *Working in Groups*
- Further suggestions for personal development

Acknowledgment:

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Working in Groups has been re-developed as an online course by Sophie Reissner-Roubicek.