BEOPPOSEDTO   OBSERVE   FOLLOW   INITIATE

THE TEAMWORK HANDBOOK

UNIL | Université de Lausanne

Centre de soutien à l'enseignement

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I am worried about working in a team

Five reasons for teamwork

1. It prepares me for the reality of most jobs.

2. There are more ideas in many heads than in one.

3. If we can organsie ourself, this can be a time saver...

4. We share our knowledge and learn together.

5. I can train all kinds of skills like adaptation, persuasion, leadership, observation and organization ... : a real playground !

Four roles for productive interactions

Take the initiative by proposing an idea or recommendation	**Follow the idea** by accepting the proposal and putting it into action	**Oppose** by questioning ideas and decisions in a constructive way	**Observe** by reporting on group dynamics

Management Sciences for Health, 2006

Hats are exchanged according to the tasks to be accomplished and organised. The key to successful group work is the circulation of roles, and in particular that of leadership, according to the skills, resources and motivations of the team members.

*Extract from Lanarès & Daele, 2013, p. 142*

I can't get my ideas across

How to get your ideas across?

DO'S (ADVICE)	DONT'S (TO AVOID)
SPEAKING IN A GROUP Verbalise the difficulty at group level « I have an idea, but I have the feeling that I am not being heard, would you agree to take 2 minutes for me to explain what I have thought of? ». Using the « I » language often has a fairly positive influence.	**WAIT UNTIL OVERFLOWING** To say nothing, to think that no one is listening to you anyway, to get angry, to think that you're going straight to the wall, this is offloading your responsibilities. You are a member of the group in your own right. The risk with this attitude is that you will break down in front of everyone at an inopportune moment and share your idea in an emotional way, which is likely to be much less constructive.
THE OUT-OF-GROUP STRATEGY Identify the leader of the group or someone who seems to be a good listener and share the proposal with him/her in an informal setting outside of meetings, so that two voices are heard rather than one.	**TRY TO CHANGE GROUPS** Fleeing the group may be a last resort but will lead to a failure to work together. It is important to know that in the real world of work, this solution will most often not be possible, unless you resign…

With my team, we are in the dark
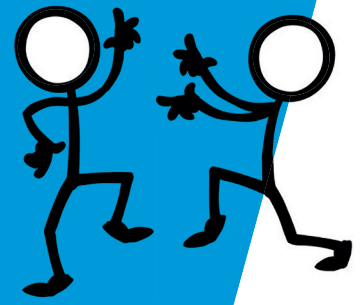
Check-list to get out of the fog

List of practices that can help to structure your meetings.

	We tried	We didn't try
Explain clearly the objective and result the group wants to achieve and by what deadline.		
Make an agenda that sets the objectives to be achieved at the end of the session.		
Choose a member* that facilitate the meeting and ensures that the discussion does not deviate from the objectives set (especially for groups with more than 3 members).		
Appoint a secretary* to keep a record of decisions taken.		
Define the duration of the meeting (from 1:30 to 3 hours) and appoint a timekeeper* who will ensure that the meeting starts and finishes on time.		
Use the vote for decision making.		
Reread the minutes of the previous session at the beginning of each meeting, to start from a common framework.		
Divide the tasks for the next session, and write them at the end of the minutes.		
Ask the secretary* of the meeting to send the minutes 2-3 days before the next one and to remind everyone their tasks.		

The moderator, secretary or chairperson can change at each meeting : this will allow everyone to try out these roles and furthermore to develop.

The roles of the team leader

Clarify the content (make sure that everyone is talking about the same thing)

Stimulate everyone to speak, contain those who invade the discussion and raise awareness of speaking time

Establishing a respectful and welcoming climate

Extract from Bonvin & Lanarès, 2003, p. 3.

Conflicts, always conflicts

Did you know ?

As the diagram below shows, conflict is a constitutive stage in the development of a group. It is therefore important to play it down: it is normal to go through a discussion stage, or even an argument when working in a group.
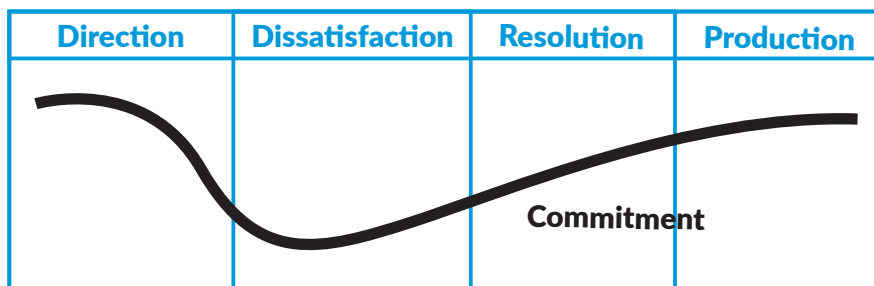
Direction	Dissatisfaction	Resolution	Production

Commitment

Diagram : Lacoursiere, 1980, quoted by Lanarès et Daele, 2013, p. 141.

The key is to get beyond this stage and keep moving forward...

3 tips to manage the conflict stage

De-dramatise

This is a classic stage of teamwork

Communicate

Speak in « I » language
Fact-emotions-needs-solution

Re-focusing

What is our collective work objective?

Tips for the decision making

Decide whether decisions will be made by consensus, majority or spontaneous. If you plan to decide by consensus (i.e. a decision that I agree to implement even if it does not reflect my favorite point of view), check for agreement individually (and not in a shouting match: "Is everyone ok with that?").

Put a time limit for the decision making, ("We give ourselves X minutes/hours to reach consensus on this decision"). Define what happens if consensus is not reached after the time limit ("We give ourselves X minutes/hours, we decide by majority, etc.")

Extract from Bonvin & Lanarès, 2003, p2.

Some members are not involved

What if it wasn't for laziness ?

UNDERSTAND *Possible reasons for a lack of investment*	ACT *What I can do /* *What the group can do*
The person does not dare to put their ideas in front of everyone.	Organise table rounds. Organise brainstorming of ideas before the mettings, in a shared moment. Allow time for everyone to express themselves and accept silence.
The person does not know how he/she can be useful to the group.	Make each group members responsible during the session (secretary, timekeeper, moderator). Set tasks with deadlines to complete outside the session (on task each) and start the next session based on everyone's progress.
The person says that he/she is overwhelmed by too much work.	Take time for individual work during meetings : for example, each person devotes 20 minutes to a point asking to him/her, and then held a group discussion. Set work objectives and tasks that are achievable within the requested deadlines.
The person does what the group asks, but it is often sloppy.	Divide the tasks into pairs, this can be motivating. As a group determine the tasks to be done, list them, clarify the expectations, and then each person assigns himself/herself the task that he or she feels most capable of doing.
The person has not understood the expectations and social codes of the group.	Decide to create a charter with the expectations about the group for each of its members. Verbalise, make explicit, clarify.

We work on our own

Where is the problem ?

It is said that « team work » does not necessarily mean « working together all the time ».

- The group makes it possible to define common objectives, to generate ideas, to coordinate and distribute the tasks to be accomplished, to synthesise and validate the work done individually.
- Individual work is mainly used for reaserching information, deepening knowledge and preparing working documents.

Extract from Bonvin & Lanares, 2003, p. 4

The information collected and the work done should be circulated among the group members...

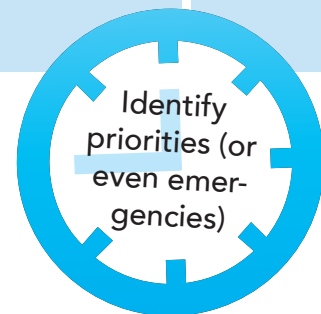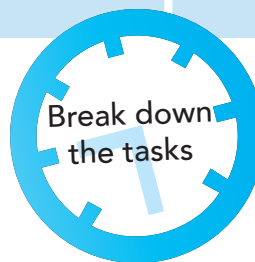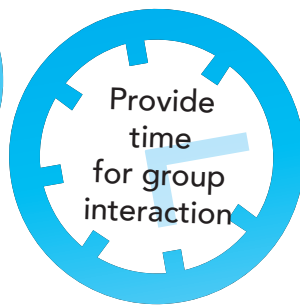| To do list to optimize the information flow within the group	Check
Choose : we have chosen a shared folder system (SWITCHdrive, GOOGLEdrive, Dropbox, TEAMS...).	
Getting organised : we have organised the folders sharing with subfolders like this everyone knows where to put what document.	
Be systematic : as soon as we make progress on the team work (alone or in group), we share the file via the chosen system.	

... And decisions/division of tasks must be made in agreement and in concert among members.

To do list to improve consistency in the individual tasks performed for the collective work	Check
Planning : organisational and decision making meetings were planned at regular intervals (e.g. every 2 weeks).	
Structure : an action plan has been drawn up collectively and everyone knows what they have to achieve and by when (tool : Gantt diagram).	
Communicating : a contact list of the group members has been established and is available on the shared folder. In case of blockage, hesitation or question, the group can be requested directly.	

Time management

« *The more time allocated to a task, the longer it takes to finish.* » Parkinson's Law

Action plan (objectives/to do)	Available time	Who? (alone, in pairs, all)	Expected results	Deadline
....	....	....	....	....

Dare to seek support

Provide time for group interaction

Break down the tasks

Identify priorities (or even emergencies)

Bonvin, R., & Lanarès, J. (2003). *Travail en groupe - mode d'emploi.* En ligne : http://dsi.upf.pf/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/UNIL-CSE-Travail-en-groupe.pdf, consulté le 5 septembre 2016.

Lanarès, J., & Daele, A. (2013). Comment organiser le travail en groupe des étudiants? In D. Berthiaume & N. Rege Colet (Eds.), *La pédagogie de l'enseignement supérieur: repères théoriques et applications pratiques* (Vol. 1, pp. 135-148). Berne: Peter Lang.

Management Sciences for Health (2006). *Transformer les managers en leaders.* En ligne : https://www.msh.org/sites/msh.org/files/mwl_french_final_pdf.pdf, consulté le 12 février 2018.

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