

Assignment Title: Effective Team-working and Communication

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Introduction

Teamwork is an important skill in both education and the workplace. Working well with others allows a group to achieve shared goals more effectively. Through my recent experience working in a team, I learned a lot about communication, leadership, and conflict resolution. Before this experience, I assumed teamwork was just about completing tasks together. However, I quickly realised that working in a team requires patience, flexibility, and strong interpersonal skills.

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) describe a team as “a small. Number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and an approach for. Which they held themselves mutually accountable.” This means that a successful team is not joust a group of people working in the same space but a unit that supports each other and takes responsibility for the final result.

In this report, I will reflect on my experience of working in a team, using theories such as Tuckerman’s (1965) model of team development, Belbin’s (1981) team roles and the Thomas-Kilmann conflict management model. I will also discuss the challenges I faced and what I learned from them.

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Findings

Understanding Team Development Theories

During my time working in the team, I noticed that our progress followed Tuckerman's (1965) Stages of Group Development, which include:

1. **Forming** – When we first formed our team, everyone was polite but unsure of their roles. We did not know how to work together yet.
2. **Storming** – once we started working on tasks, conflicts arose. Some members wanted to take charge, while others preferred a more equal approach.
3. **Norming** – As time went on, we began to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses. We learned to cooperate and respect different opinions.
4. **Performing** – Eventually, we became a strong team. Our communication improved, and we worked well together to complete our project.
5. **Adjourning** – Once our work was done, we reflected on our experience and shared feedback.

The storming stage was the most difficult for us. There were disagreements about leadership and decision-making. However, once we got past that, we were able to work together more smoothly. I realised that conflict is a natural part of teamwork and, if handled correctly, can actually help a team grow stronger.

My Role in the team

Belbin's (1981) Team Roles theory helped me understand my contributions to the team. According to Belbin, there are nine different roles that people naturally take on in a team. These can be grouped into:

- **Action-oriented Roles** – Shaper, Implementer, Completer – Finisher.
- **People-Oriented Roles** – Coordinator, Teamworker, Resource Investigator.
- **Thinking Roles** – Plant, Monitor, Evaluator, Specialist.

Reflecting on my behaviour in the team, I noticed that I often took a step back instead of taking charge. I preferred to listen to others and contribute when I felt confident in my ideas. Based on Belbin's model, I believe I fit into the Teamworker role. Teamworkers support the group, help maintain harmony, and encourage cooperation. However, they sometimes avoid conflict and struggle to take strong leadership positions.

While my role helped create a positive team environment, I sometimes found it difficult to assert my opinions. There were moments when I had ideas but hesitated to share them, fearing they might cause disagreement. This connects to my conflict management style, which I learned about through the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument.

Before working in the team, I took the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, which assesses how people handle conflict. My results showed that I am a withdrawal type of person, meaning I tend to avoid conflict rather than face it directly.

Since I tend to avoid conflict, I sometimes struggled to speak up when I disagreed with a team decision. For example, during the storming phase, there was a disagreement about how to divide tasks. Instead of expressing my concerns, I stayed quiet and accepted the decision, even though I felt that some members were taking on too much work while others had very little to do.

Later, I realised that avoiding conflict does not actually help the team. Instead, it led to frustration and an uneven workload. If I had spoken earlier, we could have found a fairer way to distribute tasks. This experience taught me that handling conflict in a healthy and open way is important for a team's success.

One of the biggest challenges I faced was finding the confidence to express my thoughts. Because of my tendency to avoid conflict, I sometimes hesitated to share my opinions, especially when I disagreed with others. However, I learned that my perspective was valuable and that disagreements could lead to better decisions when discussed respectfully.

Before this experience, I viewed conflict as something negative. However, I now understand that conflict is a normal and necessary part of teamwork. The key is to handle it constructively. I learned that avoiding conflict can sometimes make things worse, whereas discussing issues openly can lead to better teamwork.

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Conclusion and Future Improvements

Reflecting on my teamwork experience, I can see both my strengths and areas for improvement. I was supportive, cooperative, and helped create a positive atmosphere in the team. However, I also need to work on asserting my opinions, handling conflict more effectively, and balancing my natural tendency to avoid disagreements with the need for honest communication.

To improve in future teamwork situations, I plan to practice speaking up, share my thoughts more openly, even when I disagree, develop conflict resolution skills would lead me to learn to address disagreements calmly and constructively instead of avoiding them, strengthen my leadership goals by taking more initiative in group discussions and task delegation and lastly I would want to improve my emotional intelligence by being more aware of my teammates' emotions and support them effectively.

By making these changes, I hope to become a more confident and effective team member. This experience has shown me that teamwork is not just about getting the job done but also about learning, adapting, and growing as an individual.

References

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