

Critically reflect on your experience of the role play scenarios to identify the key challenges in successful project delivery when working as a team (25%, 2000 words or equivalent)

Throughout the lectures for this module of project design and delivery, there were several role-playing scenarios wherein students were encouraged to discuss an archaeological scenario and decide on the best course of action. These scenarios were based on the early stages of a project such as deciding on the significance of the known heritage assets, planning what work will need to be done, and making decisions relating to the project budget. The intent of these scenarios was supposed to provide an insight into the key challenges archaeologists face when planning a project, and to provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their own performance not only when faced with these difficulties but also to reflect on their role within a team. This assignment aims to reflect on the authors performance and identify some of the key challenges that affect project planning in a team setting.

The first role-playing scenario was centred around the project start-up phase with the scenario that an energy company were considering developing a test tidal energy weir in Goldcliff, Wales and were seeking advice on the potential archaeological constraints of the area (Locock and Nayling 2022b). The aim of this scenario was to produce a project proposal for assessing the archaeological potential of the chosen area. The scenario began with a discussion about whether any further information would be necessary to decide on the archaeological and heritage impact of the development (Locock and Nayling 2022a). I chose not to participate in this part of the discussion as I have very little experience in planning archaeological fieldwork and do not know what archaeologists need to know in order

to determine the impact of a development. The second part of the discussion was based on the known heritage assets of the site and surrounding area which could be significant enough, or require work, that could cause the developer to move the proposed development to another area. This part of the discussion involved some knowledge of Welsh heritage organisation and inter-tidal archaeology of which I do not have any experience with making my participation in this discussion obsolete beyond a quick glance at the coflein mapping tool. The group discussed potential for archaeology from the Mesolithic through the post-medieval period based on known archaeology in the area, the geology, and the research framework for the region; it was concluded that the area had a high potential for archaeology, including an early 19th Century ship that sank just off the coast which could be in close proximity to the site. The final part of this discussion was based on what stages of work we would propose for the archaeological intervention for this development (Locock and Nayling 2022a). In preparation for this discussion, I had decided on a list of ideas that, in my limited experience with fieldwork, I would like to see happen. This list included a DBA, boreholes to get an idea of the presence and depth of archaeological landscapes and horizons, some sort of non-intrusive survey such as geophysics, followed by an evaluation and/or excavation. Due to my role as a post-excavation archaeologist and with my limited terrestrial archaeological fieldwork experience, I have no knowledge about inter-tidal archaeology and as such did not have many suggestions other than those that I have known to be done on terrestrial investigations, so my knowledge of what kinds of survey would work on an inter-tidal zone is lacking and I would not have been able to contribute to this discussion to the same extent as other more experienced members of the group. For this role-play scenario I did not contribute to this discussion, largely because I do not have

knowledge or experience in this area and would not have been able to contribute to the discussion in a way that other members of the group could. I do think that this highlights an area of project planning and delivery that presents a key challenge when working as a team and that is having team members present who do not necessarily need to be there nor have anything to contribute to the discussion.

Many attempts have been made at categorising the different types of people on successful teams (notably Belbin, but others such as Parker too), and none include unnecessary members who cannot contribute to the discussion. I think this is a key challenge to the successful delivery of a project while working as team as it can lead to the members who need to be there and can contribute to discussions to, over time, feel angry or spiteful towards those who do not or cannot contribute as it could appear that they aren't contributing because they don't want the project to succeed or don't want to work with the rest of the team as opposed to lack of ability or experience. Belbin (2010, 77) states that inter-personal conflict does not necessarily mean that a team will not succeed but this was concluded based on a short-term exercise with a known end-date and as Belbin states "The strain of failing could be endured provided it did not last long" (2010, 76). In the long-term having ineffective team members could cause inter-personal conflict to grow to a point where this could cause these members to refuse to work with each other, and while this is not something that would have become a problem during this scenario, or other scenarios within this module, it is something that presents a key challenge for teams in real life.

The next roleplay scenario was looking up the known heritage assets for a site and assigning a level of significance to each asset, whether that be no, minor, local, regional, or national significance, and deciding if the assets would impact the proposed development. For this discussion we were all in agreement that most, if not all, of the known heritage assets were of local significance and that they were not close enough or significant enough that they would impact the proposed development. During this discussion I raised that some of the buildings in the farm complex being developed may be an as yet unrecognised heritage asset and that map regression might be a good way of determining this; if the buildings were found to be of historic significance then the development could harm the asset and either the building would need to be recorded or the proposed development would need to change. Having since looked at historic maps, most of the buildings were built in the mid-late 1900s though one 'L' shaped building was present as far back as 1883 (Ordnance Survey 1883) though likely pre-dates this; older maps are not available for viewing online so it was not possible to confirm the age of the building, nor is the building visible on google street view so an estimate of age is not achievable from this aspect either. I do not believe that I would make a different decision now as the known heritage assets would still be of local significance and the age of the farm building is still unknown so the impact the development would have on this potential asset is still unknown. I think the key challenge with this scenario was the roles were all playing. For this scenario we were all playing the role of 'Contributor' (Parker, 2008, 73) or 'Resource Investigator' (Belbin, 2010, 184) whose role is defined by gathering information to provide to the rest of the team. Belbin (2010, 82) states that a team composed of largely resources investigators would not be very productive as no one would make any decisions. Fortunately, the chair for this discussion also

acted as what Belbin describes as a 'shaper' and a 'co-ordinator' keeping us on track and making sure we all had our opinions heard (Locock and Nayling, 2022c). I think this presents another key challenge in the successful delivery of a project when working as a team and that is you don't always get to choose who is on your team, what role you each play, and people will naturally gravitate to certain roles depending on their personality. More outgoing and extraverted personalities will gravitate to the more social roles such as Parker's 'collaborator' or 'communicator' or Belbin's 'team worker' all of which revolve around communication between team members and working directly with other members (Parker 2008, 73; Belbin 2010, 185); whereas more introverted members may gravitate to the more insular roles such as Belbin's specialist or completer-finisher. Teams who fail to have an ideal composition of these different roles, whether this may be lacking certain positions or overfilling others risk not living up to their full potential as Belbin's Apollo Companies show (Belbin 2010, 17-19).

The third roleplay scenario was looking at heritage assets for a proposed development and deciding what level of mitigation would be appropriate for each asset. My initial thought for this mostly aligned with what was later agreed during the group discussion. However, there are a few differences; notably regarding the peat deposits. I originally thought that multiple column samples would be the best approach as it would allow us to track the movement of the stream and to determine the known depths of this peat and any variations within that area. Following the group discussion, we were split 50/50 between taking one sample and taking several with the chair having to make the final decision (Locock and Nayling 2022d). I think we made the right decision as we didn't know whether the development would

impact the preservation of the peat deposits so taking multiple samples while the opportunity is there, even if they aren't all assessed by the archaeological contractor as part of the post-excavation process, they might be able to be given to a researcher or stored until someone takes an interest in them; or, perhaps more likely, one could be assessed to see the potential and/or significance of the sample and the others could be discarded or assessed accordingly. I think this also highlights the needs for a someone within the team to be decisive and take the role of monitor-evaluator (per Belbin 2010) and be the logical and impartial tiebreaker.

The final scenario was about preparing a budget for a fieldwork project. For this we were each assigned a role and given a choice that would affect the proposed budget; I was assigned as the staffing manager and had to choose between assigning six or nine people to the site. I based my decision on what was best for the company rather than what would be best for that project, as such I chose to assign nine people to the project so that the company would be paying them to do something worthwhile. Additionally, I based this decision with the thought that if there are nine people, we might be able to complete the site in a shorter timeframe which would please the client. On the whole I largely agreed with the decisions we made as individuals and as a group, however there are some areas where I would disagree. Originally the finds specialist decided that they would prefer to offer direct advice and potentially visit the site despite commitments to other projects (Locock and Nayling 2022e); I disagree with this choice as they have already made the commitment to the other projects which means those project would have been budgeted for accordingly and by passing those off to someone else those projects would be at risk of going over budget which could risk the budget of the whole project. I would argue that

hiring a freelancer for this project would be the better option as, even though they may be more expensive, we could account for this in the budget for this project and prevent delays and increased spending for the other projects. The key challenge for this scenario was balancing making the right decision for the company, the employees, the archaeology, the client, and the budget. These decisions will always be a key part of teamwork in business, but these decisions need to be made and sometimes it's not possible to make the best decisions for all of the stakeholders and this task aimed at showing that by making us choose between two options under several categories.

Overall, I think these exercises have highlight some key challenges that present themselves while trying to deliver a successful project when working as part of a team. The challenges mentioned above are but a brief glance into the challenges that can plague a team and prevent a project from running smoothly. Every team is going to encounter difficulties as no team is going to have the same members in the same job role forever and the makeup of the team is going to change and people move jobs, as company focus changes, as new members are brought in. Effective teamwork is about pushing through these challenges and overcoming them in order to succeed.

Total Words: 2149

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