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Assignment 1: Written report
Effective team working and communication
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BMSW4009 Effective Team Working and Communication - 3

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Introduction

Teamwork and communication are essential skills for people working in groups or projects. Effective collaboration leads to academic success and helps to develop real-world skills vital for future careers. This report combines academic theories with my practical experiences (Duck & McMahan, 2019). This reflective report is based on my collaborative work in college during various team projects. Before understanding and communicating with others we need to know ourselves and research the various elements of the environment (Tuckman & Harper, 2012). These aspects help us modify our behaviour patterns and adapt and improve ourselves to be able to participate more effectively. We can learn to be more proactive and solve complex problems (Heffernan, 2011). This report reflects on my experiences of working within teams, linking these to relevant theories on teamwork, group dynamics, and communication. It aims to identify ways to improve the team's effectiveness by examining my role in group projects through theories and various communication strategies.

Applying Team Development Theories and Group Dynamics Models

Team effectiveness is enhanced when a team continues to evaluate and reflect through its stages of development. Tuckman's model includes Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning and is a relevant framework even decades after its development (Helfand, 2020). Our team members focused on understanding each other's strengths and preferred roles at the start of each project (the Forming stage). Our team also witnessed disagreements around scheduling and task priorities during the Storming stage. According to Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode instrument (TKI), I identify with the collaborating and compromising styles (Stadler, 2019). This was a challenging stage initially as we struggled to overcome and combine our differing approaches to work. We also recognised this as a natural part of team development and made a conscious effort to address the issues directly and move toward the Norming stage (Helfand, 2020). We could establish a clearer division of tasks and a sense of collaboration during this stage. Gradually members

started to expect and anticipate the reactions from team members and identify each other's needs without constant communication. This progression through Tuckman's stages helped me to see how managing the evolving group dynamics is crucial for the success of a team (CIPD, 2023). This helped us all to contribute more actively. The team members became more autonomous and productive by the time we reached the performing stage and that helped us to achieve our team goals efficiently.

Belbin's Team Roles also made us identify our roles in the team as we learned and grew to understand our strengths and weaknesses (Belbin, 2010). I discovered that I was more suited to the role of a coordinator. I enjoy creating structure and within a team and found myself facilitating discussions many times. Being a coordinator suited my strengths as I could assign tasks to team members incorporating everyone's opinions and ideas. Belbin's model also helped me identify that I was dominating at times as I tried to influence conversations and decisions too much (Belbin, 2010). Understanding this drawback helped me improve by stepping back occasionally. I learned to listen to the other members, and we could all work together to implement their practical ideas.

Human relationships and diversity in teams

The college teams had team members from different departments and brought varied perspectives to each project. This diversity sparked creativity, allowing us to consider ideas I wouldn't have thought of alone (Stadler, 2019). Working in a college team thus taught me the significance of diversity. Once a team member majoring in marketing suggested a new idea for our presentation, as he could imagine the audience engagement. This aligns with social identity theory suggesting that our interactions are influenced by our group identities. This experience helped me appreciate the individual strengths and diverse perspectives of people.

Collaborative teamwork required us to define our shared responsibilities, individual task ownerships, and confidentiality (Adair, 2015). Though each member was responsible for their tasks, support was available. Our project needed to remain

original and confidential, and we decided not to share any details with others. The team became more cohesive with the development of trust.

Communication and active listening played a significant role in my teamwork experience (Stadler, 2019). Communication was the key to resolving conflicts as it helped us understand the perspectives of all teammates. For example, by actively listening I could identify the diverse, flexible, and structured approaches of members. I could mediate and find a middle ground that worked for the team.

Clear, structured written communication is essential in teamwork, and we used emails and shared documents for our group project (Heffernan, 2012). Concise language and well-organised emails helped avoid misunderstandings and taught me the value of clarity in written communication. We used visual aids in our presentation as I realised it was important to consider the audience's perspective for presenting complex information. Visual elements like charts and infographics make the presentation more engaging. This experience highlighted the importance of adapting communication styles based on the audience's needs.

Impact of theories and models on my team participation

Applying these theories helped me approach teamwork. For example, Tuckman's model helped me understand that conflicts are a natural part of group work, and that addressing them constructively can lead to a stronger team. The team dynamic is ever-changing and evolves slowly as the team members slowly learn to overcome conflicts and work with others (Tannenbaum & Salas, 2020). Belbin's team roles helped me identify my strengths and limitations as a coordinator. I could see my faults and learned to respect others' contributions and perspectives and work better in my role. Embracing diversity is instrumental in including different perspectives and making team projects more authentic. I have learnt to be more mindful about people understanding complex information by practising active listening (Kline, 2002). I have realised the potential effectiveness of clarity in written and oral communication. These skills will help me become more sensitive and easier to work with.

Conclusion: actions for improving effective team participation

During my college projects, I have been able to identify specific actions I must implement to improve my effectiveness and has taught me to embrace diversity within the group. I will also evaluate my role as a coordinator by respecting other members' space to contribute their ideas (Heffernan, 2015). I will actively seek input from members with different perspectives. I will continue practising clear and structured communication, modifying my techniques to connect with the team members and the audience (Quintanilla & Wahl, 2019). All these actions will help me become a more effective, adaptable, and collaborative team member, skills that will benefit me academically and in my professional career.

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Appendices

Appendix-1

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

Thomas-Kilmann Self-Assessment

Conflict Style	Statement	1 (Rarely)	2 (Sometimes)	3 (Often)	4 (Very Often)	Total Score
Competing (Forcing)	I seek to focus on winning the disagreements than compromising	1				
	I argue my point of view to achieve the desired result	1				
	I prioritise winning my goals than upholding harmony	1				3
Collaborating (Problem-Solving)	I encourage open discussion in conflicts			3		

	I adequately invest my time in understanding different perspectives			3		
	I look for solutions that can satisfy all			3		9
Compromising (Sharing)	I propose for conflict resolution solutions which is agreeable for both the teams even if partially			3		
	I settle for outcomes that are acceptable rather than perfect results			3		
	I seek to find a common ground when a team member gives up on something			3		9

Avoiding (Withdrawal)	I prefer the minor issues to go unresolved	1				
	To prevent tension, I avoid discussing the disagreed points	1				
	I delay conflict resolution, hoping for them to dissipate themselves	1				3
Accommodating (Smoothing)	I agree with other individuals' suggestions to avoid conflict	1				
	I focus on bonding rather than achieving my set objectives	1				
	I prioritise other's needs over my own for harmony	1				3

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument	My style	Improvement areas
Competing		
Collaborating	Collaborating Actively listening Seeking balanced solutions	Enhance my ability for balancing collaboration with assertiveness
Compromising	Compromising to resolve issues quickly	More effective problem-solving.
Avoiding,		
Accommodating		

Appendix 2-

Self-Assessment: Belbin's Team Roles

My Roles	My contributions	Improvement areas
Coordinator	Facilitating discussions, organising tasks, Creating a structured approach	Allow balance in the team and be less controlling
Team worker	Actively supporting my peers Helping resolve conflicts	Enable greater contribution from members who are more creative

Appendix-3

Self-Assessment: Communication Style

My style	Result	Improvement areas
Supportive Building rapport, Active listening, Validating others' ideas	A positive, collaborative environment Fostering trust within the group	More assertiveness to make swift decisions.
Analytical Analytical style in written communication Attention to detail	Clarity, structure, Prevent misunderstandings	Be confident in communication