

# **Survey of Literature on the Use of Learning and Project Teams in the Classroom**

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November 28, 2005

## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Stage One: Forming .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Best Practices for Faculty .....	5
Determine the Size .....	5
Determine the Composition.....	5
Assign the group work early in the course .....	6
Ensure physical space and resources .....	6
Establish clear objectives .....	6
Ensure the task has real interdependence .....	6
Help groups to develop a plan .....	6
Give the students the skills they need to communicate well .....	6
One option: have them sign a written contract.....	6
Facilitate team building .....	6
Facilitate establishing roles .....	6
Pre-determine the methods of assessment.....	7
Establish credibility with the teams at this time .....	7
<b>Stage Two: Storming.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Best Practices for Faculty .....	8
<b>Stage Three: Norming.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Best Practices for Faculty .....	9
Help students to think critically.....	9
Regularly check in with the student teams .....	9
<b>Stage Four: Performing .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Stage Five: Adjourning .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Best Practices for Faculty .....	10
Training of Faculty .....	11
Best practices of group facilitation.....	12
Training of Students: .....	13
Best Practices at the University level .....	13
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Reference List .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix A: Get Acquainted Exercises .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Appendix A #1: Team Self Assessment .....	17
Appendix A #2: Bridge Building.....	19
<b>Appendix B: Setting Ground Rules Exercise.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<i>How I would like our team to be.</i> .....	20
<b>Appendix C: Team Roles Survey .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix D: Self Assessment Surveys.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Appendix D #1: Assessing Yourself (Communication).....	23
Appendix D #2: Assessing Yourself (Feedback) .....	24
Appendix D #3: The Team Player Inventory .....	26
<b>Appendix E: Exercises to Promote Communication Skills.....</b>	<b>28</b>
Appendix E #1: Once Upon A Team .....	28

Objectives .....	28
Uses.....	28
Art Forms .....	28
Time Required.....	28
Materials, Handouts, and Equipment.....	28
Procedure .....	28
Discussion.....	29
Variations .....	29
Once Upon a Team.....	30
Appendix E #2: Giving Positive Feedback .....	31
Appendix E #3.....	32
Peer Feedback .....	32
Peer Feedback .....	32
<b>Appendix F: Conflict Survey &amp; Exercises.....</b>	<b>33</b>
Appendix F #1: Assessing Yourself (Conflict) .....	33
Appendix F #2: Conflict Management Exercise: Humpty Dumpty's Spaceship Challenge ....	35
Case Study # 1 .....	36
Case Study #2.....	36
Appendix F #4: Conflict Role-Plays .....	37

## Introduction

This paper presents the results of a sampling of the literature covering the challenges and opportunities stemming from the use of student teams in the classroom. There have been hundreds of articles and books on this subject since the mid eighties. With one exception, this sample is limited to publications from the year 2000 and on.

The information from this review is organized utilizing the popular model of 5 distinct phases of Group Development (*forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning*) first developed by Tuckman in 1965. These phases can be very periodic and can apply to all groups, small or large in size. Strategies for the professor and for the students are included within the different stages.

Although all the authors agree that the use of classroom teams is fraught with difficulties and frustrations for both students and faculty, they also agree that somehow, in any programme of study, students must gain the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to successfully work in teams (Weisbord, 2004). Knight (2004) acknowledges disadvantages to group work include individuals become subsumed within the whole and some get away with doing very little work (64). “The past decade has brought changes in how work is being organized and accomplished in the workplace. Group-based activities, such as autonomous work groups, task forces, management teams and project teams are now commonplace in today’s organizations and it is expected that organizations will continue to rely on such group based activities in the future” (Ahles & Bosworth, 2004, 44). The university is seen as the place to teach the skill how to effectively work in teams as it is to be applied to the world of business. In any field, employees need to know how to interact with people, a skill that can be learned by working with others in groups. Teamwork is an essential part of contemporary education (Phaff & Huddleston, 2003, 37). A main question to consider in the use of groups in the classroom is under what classroom conditions does the use of groups outperform individuals in learning results (Bailey, Sass, Swiercz, Seal & Kayes, 2005)?

Are groups more effective than individuals? The research shows that “it depends”. It depends on the task, on the composition of the group, on the team dynamics and on the environment in which the group is performing.

Groups are more effective when:

- Skills and knowledge are pooled
- Groups have a collective recall of information
- Neither the group or any individual compared with it have expertise on the task
- Task is complex and the group and the comparison individual have expertise.

Groups are less effective than individuals when:

- The group experiences pooled ignorance
- The group norm is not to excel
- Groups are too large resulting in coordination problems and social loafing
- The task is simple
- When time is critical (Rothwell, 2004, 71-76).

The general consensus is that it is the responsibility of the faculty to equip the students with these skills, knowledge and behaviours. Rothwell (2004) cites six elements necessary to establish a cooperative team structure.

1. Interdependence - division of labour and resources
2. Equity of rewards
3. Equitable participation
4. Individual accountability
5. Cooperative communication
6. Non competitive listening.

These skills will be addressed throughout the various stages.

There are different types of groups used in classrooms: informal, ad hoc, temporary collection of students to solve short-term problems within a single class. This paper is aimed at formal learning teams who are established “to complete a specific task, such as perform a lab experiment, write a report, carry out a project, or prepare a position paper” (Gross Davis, 1993, 147).

## Stage One: Forming

**Forming** is the initial phase where students have been placed in teams (membership may or may not be decided by the professor). In this stage of orientation, students are learning about their task and about each other. They are evaluating the costs and benefits of being in this group. They are full of questions; such as who are these other people, what is expected of me, who is going to be the leader. Typically they are polite to each other. They look to the formal authority for initial rules and structure. They desire a sense of security. Not knowing who to trust is a big concern. Their priorities are to find answers to their questions, to establish trust and ascertain clarity of the purpose, norms and expectations (McShane, 2004, 242; Whetten & Cameron, 2005, 461-463).

## ***Best Practices for Faculty***

Some general rules for forming successful teams include:

- **Determine the Size:** Small teams are easier to coordinate and tend to work faster. Small teams are best when students are not skilful at being a group member and when time is of the essence. Large teams have more skills, knowledge and perspectives; but they need more structure. In general, teams from two to six members are most effective (Gross Davis, 1993, 148, McShane, 2004).
- **Determine the Composition:** The goals of the learning should also be considered when determining if groups should be diverse or homogeneous. Diversity results in more creativity but requires more time to begin and to learn how to work together. Homogeneous teams organize themselves quickly and often obtain immediate results but are less effective on complex tasks. Some ways to form groups include the following: (i) random assignment, (ii) deliberately creating diverse groups (in terms of gender, age, personality, culture, level of ability, etc.), (iii) deliberately creating homogeneous groups or (iv) letting students select their

own groups based on their experience and knowledge of each other. Knight (2004) found students, if given the chance, were most motivated to choose friends.

- **Assign the group work early in the course:** This allows the students to develop the skills sooner (Gross Davis, 1993, 150).
- **Ensure physical space and resources:** Student teams must have enough space to allow privacy between the groups and to allow the instructor to freely move among the groups. Chairs and tables should be configured to allow easy face-to-face communication. In addition, find where on campus small meeting rooms can be booked for times in and out of the regularly scheduled class time (e.g., the library has rooms; call timetabling).
- **Establish clear objectives:** Explain the objectives of the group task, define relevant concepts, the level of group participation expected and the standards by which they will be graded (Gross Davis, 1993, 148).
- **Ensure the task has real interdependence:** Offer common rewards for the group. Formulate tasks that compel students to reach a consensus (Gross Davis, 1993, 149).
- **Help groups to develop a plan:** Request each team submit a plan of action detailing who is doing what and when. Review the plan with each team (Gross Davis, 1993, 152).
- **Give the students the skills they need to communicate well:** Take time in the class, to have them practice active and tolerant listening, giving and receiving feedback and managing disagreements. Encourage them to assist one another with mastering the course material as a way to increase their interactions (Gross Davis, 1993, 148-9).
- **One option: have them sign a written contract:** This is one possible way to commit to the task, the team and the deadlines (Gross Davis, 1993, 149).
- **Facilitate team building:** This is an ongoing process that must begin in the forming stage. For effective team performance, team building needs to be addressed consciously.
  - In the forming stage, initial team activities can help members become acquainted with each other and to begin the process of developing trust. (*See Appendix A for activities.*)
  - The next step in forming is to set expectations and ground rules. (*See Appendix B for activities.*) Ask groups to report back to the professor. After hearing from all the groups, the instructor should add any missing expectations and ground rules.
- **Facilitate establishing roles:**
  - To function effectively, the team needs to assign roles. The instructor could help underscore the importance of clear roles using the following story.

“A team had four members called **Everybody**, **Somebody**, **Anybody**, and **Nobody**. There was an important job to be done. **Everybody** was sure that

**Somebody** would do it. **Anybody** could have done it, but **Nobody** did it. **Somebody** got angry about that because it was **Everybody's** job. **Everybody** thought **Anybody** could do it but **Nobody** realized that **Everybody** wouldn't do it. It ended up that **Everybody** blamed **Somebody** when **Nobody** did what **Anybody** could have done" (Silberman, 1998).

- For effective task performance group members need to have the following roles filled either permanently or rotating: facilitator, timekeeper, note-taker, monitor (to ensure everyone is on track) and researcher of needed information. As well, in order to become an effectively functioning team, the group must develop an awareness of how they are working together (Aquino & Serva, 2005). This can begin in the forming stage by enabling them to consciously consider and develop both the *task* roles and the team *maintenance* roles played naturally by the group members. The *task* roles include: initiating, summarizing, information giving and seeking, direction giving and seeking, elaborating, monitoring, process analyzing, enforcing and summarizing. The *maintenance* roles include: supporting, harmonizing, relieving tension, gate-keeping, energizing, consensus-building and expediting and expressing feelings (McShane, 2004; Whetten and Cameron, 2005, 457-459). (See Appendix C for a survey to uncover these roles).
- **Pre-determine the methods of assessment:** Studies show peer assessment of group work can foster empowerment, teamwork, autonomy, skills and deep learning (deep understanding) approaches. Learners want to know how their work in the course will be assessed. All students need to be tested on all key skills and knowledge (Knight, 2004, 74-75).
- **Establish credibility with the teams at this time:**
  - Demonstrate integrity by doing what you say you will do.
  - Be clear, consistent and confident in what you say and do.
  - Create positive energy by being optimistic and complimentary.
  - Encourage and coach team members.
  - Share information (Whetten & Cameron, 2005, 452-454).

The next sections look at issues of student engagement/participation as they are played out through the group phases of storming and norming.

## Stage Two: Storming

Storming is the stage when members become more confident, more vocal and more proactive which leads to them competing for various team roles. They begin to try influence each other, including forming coalitions. They attempt to establish norms regarding members' behaviour and performance standards. It is not surprising that they question everything: the leader, the legitimacy of the team's goals, even the opinions of the team mates. They will be wondering how they will handle disagreements, dissension, how to communicate negative information and even whether to stay in this team (McShane, 2004, 242; Cameron & Whetten, 2005, 464-467). Tensions in teams often result in disagreements and conflict.

A major primary tension in newly formed groups is what Rothwell (2004) calls “Me” versus “We”. This tension is normal and can have positive results of encouraging members to become acquainted with each other through discussing interests, experiences and beliefs on non-controversial subjects. However, if not dealt with through small talk, this tension remains and can result in lethargy, haphazard attention to task and weak productivity. Signs of primary tension include overly polite interactions and careful avoidance of controversy. Another primary tension which often surfaces at the same time results from differences in task orientation which may be cultural or culture-based.

Secondary tensions arise when the group experiences stress such as having to make decisions and being under resource constraints. A major signal of secondary tension is the replacement of the rules of polite communication with shouting and sarcasm. Secondary tension is also a normal group development and can lead to more creativity, energy and group cohesion. Too much secondary tension, however, can be destructive to the group and its members (Rothwell, 2004, 58-61).

Communication skills and conflict management skills are critical during this stage. The sources of conflict are many including the following: values differences, conflicting goals, miscommunication, scarce resources and too much differentiation. Team members in this stage need to be able to talk about these issues but often do not have the communication and interpersonal skills necessary. Before they can learn and use new behaviours, they have to become aware of how they communicate and how they manage conflict. This is an opportunity for self-analysis to increase self-awareness (*See Appendix D for self assessment instruments.*)

## ***Best Practices for Faculty***

*(See Appendix E for exercises to promote communication)*

*(See Appendix F for conflict management exercises.)*

- Tolerate and encourage disagreement
- Foster a cooperative not a competitive atmosphere for discussion
- Use active listening (paraphrasing)
- Model the appropriate interpersonal, communication and conflict management skills
- Help team members identify those who are not conforming
- “Lone wolves” are members who do not hold the group process in high esteem; do not think others are capable; think own ideas are best and find it hard to trust others to deliver goods to their standards. These may be bright students but dislike group work who frequently cope by doing all the work or control so others’ contributions are rendered pointless; are easily identified by self and the other team members and whose presence on teams has had a negative impact on group performance (Feldman Barr, Dixon & Grassenheimer, 2005).
- Confront the problem student(s) directly requesting a change in behaviour. You could assign them specific roles (Phaff & Huddleston, 2003, 38).
- One framework for feedback to try is the following: (i) summarize what you understand to be the main points (ii) detail the strengths and (iii) recommend steps to be taken (Byrnes, 2005).



- Encourage students to stay with the team when conflict is occurring. Some may request a change of team or to do the assignment on their own (Gross Davis, 1993, 153).

## Stage Three: Norming

In this stage, the members have achieved some clarity about the task, who their team-mates are and their own roles in this group. The more they interact with each other, the more they will develop a team culture. There will be pressure for members to conform. They try to determine the values of the group, methods of cooperating with each other and how to fit in with their team mates. They begin to allow their needs to be met by the group achieving its goals. Feelings of loyalty, cooperation, conformity to team standards, feelings of interpersonal attraction, shared mental models increase and disagreements decrease.

The danger is the team risks groupthink (prefer feelings of cohesion over good decision-making). Groupthink leads to potential errors being committed as everyone agrees to the ideas being discussed and alternatives that are different are ignored or even derided. What is most important to the team to keep the supportive feelings going and they may miss opportunities for better decisions or worse overlook impending disasters (McShane, 2004, 242; Whetten & Cameron, 2005, 463-464).

### ***Best Practices for Faculty***

- **Help students to think critically:** Assign at least team member to perform the role of critic or “devil’s advocate”; suggest they form subgroups; offer to be an outside expert to listen and offer critiques and suggest the team think about their decision overnight and revisit it (Whetten & Cameron, 2005, 464).
- **Regularly check in with the student teams:** Establish checkpoints. Ask for drafts to be handed in to you (Gross Davis, 1993, 152).

## Stage Four: Performing

The performing stage of group development can be used to define the team’s effectiveness. It is at this stage where the group members are able to truly achieve their goals. This is the stage where synergy may be experienced.

Any change in group membership, goals, or outside stressors can cause a group to revert back to an earlier stage of development (Rothwell, 2004, 71-76).

## Stage Five: Adjourning

Evaluation and Assessment: Both students and faculty agree that there are “problems associated with evaluating student performance in group” (King, 2005). This major issue in the use of groups in the classroom which can be divided into three main data sources: complaints by faculty,

complaints by students, and issues of academic integrity. King and Behnke (2005) cite Pitt (2000) in his work using game theory to examine group project assessment. Pitt found that “problems with group assessment should be expected. Under the tenets of the theory, student’s desires to receive the highest individual grades are at odds with effective cooperative learning.

Pitt drew the following conclusions:

- “Any method of selecting groups and allocating projects, whether random or systematic, in general will give some groups an advantage and some a disadvantage.”
- “Giving all students the same mark means that a sensible group strategy would involve having the weaker students contribute less.”
- “Although the allocation of marks is a motivator, factors such as teamwork and contribution to the group are hard to define and essentially impossible to assess fairly.”
- “Rating students on some perceived performance has as much to do with perception as performance and may sometimes be unfair: for example, the student who contributed least to the problem solving may give the most confident presentation.”
- “Some assessment factors can actually promote dishonesty and competition” (Pitt, 2000, 239-240 as cited in King & Behnke, 2005, 58).

Pitt’s conclusions highlight the academic integrity issue of the justification and defence of grading methods for group projects. The grading method of assigning one grade to the whole group means they are maximizing measurement error (King & Behnke, 2005). “Groups can vary widely in terms of individual student talent, suggesting that more work and lower grades could be a natural consequence of being in a bad group” (King & Behnke, 2005, 58). Heterogeneous grouping is one way to overcome this but this method of group formation often results in the isolation of students who lack skills or talent (Bacon, 2005). The counter argument to this point is that is the way it is in the real world. Minorities and low performers often find themselves isolated from work groups (Felder & Brent, 2001 as cited in King & Behnke, 2005). The issue, according to King and Behnke (2005), is “whether or not to simulate the problems of the work world more accurately at the expense of fairness and methodological rigor (58).”

### ***Best Practices for Faculty***

- An approach used in many academic settings has the students themselves assign a grade or a portion of the grade. This approach may include :
  - The instructor assigns the grade to the entire group which is then modified by the individual members’ personal rating
  - Members of the group provide feedback to the instructor (privately or publicly) who then assigns the grades
  - Group members award points to members, equally or unequally according to predetermined rules or criteria (King & Behnke, 2005).
- There are problems in involving group member in the evaluation of their peers. These include:
  - Abandonment of instructional responsibility
  - Halo effect
  - If limit number of high grades, competition ensues
  - If number of high grades not limited, inflation of ratings ensues (King & Behnke, 2005).
- Alternatives that allow the use of team work but avoid the grading pitfalls include:

- “Use groups for assignments and academic preparation while focusing the grade on individual performance” (Kroll, Masingila & Mau, 1992 as cited by King & Behnke, 2005, 59).
- Instructor grades the group product thus avoiding the filter of peer recollection and other perceptual errors.
- “Group projects can be used for foundational or formative work while individual tests/reports only contribute to a summative assessment” (Reedy, 1995 as cited in King & Behnke, 2005, 59).
- Engage the students in a frank discussion of the costs and benefits of group work.
  - Persuade students to accept potential values of developing skills in teamwork
  - Inoculate students against potential problems by discussing the problems ahead of time
  - Due notice on class activities and grading methods (King & Behnke, 2005).
- Knight (2004) advocates, based on his study on student perception and performance in individual and group assessments, that “A change in approach to both individual and group assessment, through the development of more innovative assessment modes and methods including peer assessment, should be only a part of a wider change in approach to teaching and learning. For example, an implication of this is that undergraduate lectures should present ideas, test hypotheses and evaluate evidence rather than list facts and figures that are not open to discussion. This should provide the basis for more discursive and innovative assessments within practical classes, and help make students stakeholders in their own learning process” (Knight, 2004, 75-76).

## Training of Faculty

This training covers competencies that faculty require in order to attain success using teams in the classroom. “Few instructors do much more than assign the teams and effective teamwork requires training in how to work in teams” (Vik, 2001. 112, as cited in King & Behnke, 58). “Often instructors simply lack the time or knowledge to prepare students properly for group activities” (King & Behnke, 2005, 58).

The following behaviours of students in groups indicate a need for facilitation: confusion, going off topic, unequal participation, one-way communication, no division of labour, and doing the task or activity in a very superficial manner. Facilitation skills are critical for successful short-term or long-term groups and for learning or project groups. These skills include:

- Motivating participation: Invite students to buy into the activity or sell them on the benefits of participating. Make sure the students understand what to expect.
- Directing students’ activities: Instructions must be concise and clear and given orally and in writing.
- Managing the group process: Ensure groups are composed effectively and never left idle.
- Keeping the students involved: Students must be challenged by the activity and given an appropriate amount of time to complete each activity.
- Processing the activity: Ensure time for students to express their learning and views of each activity.

## **Best practices of group facilitation** include:

- **Motivating group participation:**
  - State clear objectives for the group and make the purpose clear.
  - Sell the benefits of doing group work. If there are not any benefits to the students, do not use groups.
  - Convey your enthusiasm for group work
  - Connect their group work to their other learning experiences in class and to future career possibilities
  - Express your confidence in the student groups
- **Directing students' group activities:**
  - Explain clearly what is expected of the group and allow time for questions
  - Speak slowly and use visual backups
  - Make sure everyone can hear you and is following what you are saying
  - Define important terms and check for understanding
  - Demonstrate the activities that will fulfill the expectations of the groups
- **Managing the groups' process:**
  - Be clear on the goals for the learning experience when designing the groups. Choose a method to form groups that fits with your goals
  - Keep teams together when continuity is important and temporarily mix the groups for variety and interest
  - Form your groups before you give more instructions; give them time to meet each other
  - Ask the groups to select a facilitator/timekeeper
  - For multipart group activities, give the instructions separately (after each activity) and in both oral and written form
  - If groups finish the exercise at different rates have additional questions ready to keep them busy
  - Be sure and let the groups know how much time they have to complete an exercise. Circulate among the groups to answer questions, provide encouragement, sense how they are doing and help keep them focused.
- **Keep your students involved**
  - Keep the activity moving: a fast pace is more interesting than slow.
  - Provide challenge, encourage deep thinking about answers and practicing new behaviours
  - Praise your students, catch them doing things right
  - Induce students to move physically
  - Be enthusiastic and energetic (Silberman, 1998, 265-282).
- **Debriefing the learning experience**
  - Ask relevant questions to cause students to think about what they are learning as well as getting their feedback.

- If you have a number of debriefing questions: parcel them out among the groups and have them report back.
- Observe your students during the debriefing. If need be, model constructive criticism, positive confrontation and feedback. Circulate among the groups and join the discussion to promote more depth in the learning
- Listen to the student's opinions and save your insights until the conclusion of the debrief (Thacker & Blanchard, 2006, 336-366).

## **Training of Students:**

- Knowledge is needed on the following:
  - Types of teams that exist in the workplace
  - Strategies for managing conflicts in teams
  - Group process tools for providing ideas, diagnosing problems, strategizing, planning projects and making decisions.
  - Roles needed in teams. How do teams share responsibility and promote individual accountability.
  - Stages of team development and helpful mechanisms
- Skills needed
  - Communication
  - Conflict management
  - Goal setting
  - Decision making
  - Creativity
  - Collaboration
    - Face to face
    - On-line

## ***Best Practices at the University level***

- Hold formal information sessions at entry into a school using team learning and projects. These sessions should cover how teams are used in different organizations across all sectors with discussion of the roles that students will play in these organizations as professionals on teams. Ensure students have an understanding of the core competencies of effective teams and the importance of selecting competent team members and of demanding competent work on a project.
- Incorporate team building processes into the actual team project experience by:
  - Explaining the importance of a cohesive team and how to attain it
  - Gaining student's commitment to effective team behaviour
  - Assessing on going team needs and giving feedback,
  - Leading a team building session
  - Implementing the results

- Evaluating the impact (Ahles & Bosworth, 2004, 55).
- Require students to take a workshop on the development of team skills including the building of trust. “...several factors are key to building communication and trust, prior evidence suggests that personality traits can either facilitate or impede effective communication. ... a large part of improving group problem solving involves teaching students to effectively manage the influence of psychological preferences on group interactions and team work” (Daigle, Doran & Pardue, 1999 as cited in Amato & Amato, 2005, 42). This workshop would involve administration of the MBTI and analysis of results. Once each student understands their results they are asked to write a reflective paper responding to the following questions.
  - “What are your preferred methods of communication?”
  - “How would you prefer structuring team assignments?”
  - “What are important characteristics for you to look for in team members?”
  - “What types of team member behaviour will likely bother you?”
  - “How would you have to adjust your behaviour to work with different personality types?”
  - “What changes would you expect from team members with different personality profiles?”
 These reflections are brought to the first team meeting where students jointly respond to the following prompts:
  - Based on the cognitive style profiles and group discussion, identify the following for your group
    - Areas of agreement. Where is your team likely to work well together?
    - Areas of potential disagreement or conflict. (What problems may arise in the way your group operates?)
  - Propose solutions to the potential problems/conflicts, what do we do when we have problems.

The team then develops a team contract that “spells out exactly how the group will operate during the semester and the consequences of failing to follow the contract (Amato & Amato, 2005).

## Conclusion

“As Larson and LaFasto (1989) pointedly state: ‘The potential for collective problem solving is so often unrealized and the promise of collective achievement so often unfulfilled, that we exhibit what seems to be a developmental disability in the area of social competence...Clearly, if we are to solve the enormous problems facing our society, we need to learn how to collaborate more effectively. We need to set aside individual agendas.’ Emphasizing team building and collaborative effort can prove beneficial to both individuals and society” (Rothwell, 2004, 15). We have an opportunity through the effective use of classroom teams to improve learning of not just subject matter but also the interpersonal skills necessary for successful team work.

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## Appendix A: Get Acquainted Exercises

### **Appendix A #1: Team Self Assessment**

1. Working on your own, complete the following self-assessment.
2. Meet with your team. Appoint a facilitator, recorder, and spokesperson.
3. Engage in discussion about each member's results, strengths and weaknesses, and the meaning of the results for everyone's participation in the project at hand.
4. Discuss potential pitfalls faced by the team and ways you can work together for the success of the project.
5. Using the form below, summarize the combined strengths and weaknesses of the team and the pitfalls and ways to improve and share with the large group or class.
6. Report your results to the large group or class.
7. Discuss with the large group or class ways to improve participation in teams—lessons learned from past team experiences (negative and positive) and ways to make the current experience better.

	Disagree Neither Agree				
1. I participate willingly in team activities.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I stay with tasks I have taken on or been assigned.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I try to encourage the group to get back on track when needed.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I use team experiences as a potential learning activity.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I try consciously to be aware of my own behaviour style and that of others.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I try to engage in active listening during team projects.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I help the team by keeping track of time, facilitating, recording our discussions, summarizing results, taking notes, and being a team spokesperson as needed.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I practice disclosure of feelings and perceptions of the team process.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I practice giving constructive, honest feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I do what I can to make the team experience a positive one for all involved.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am committed to the best, highest quality product possible in any team effort of which I'm a part.	1	2	3	4	5
12. When I'm in a position to lead a team, I assume the role of coach or facilitator rather than director.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I encourage open communication and trust building when I am in team situations.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I regularly provide support, recognition, and positive feedback to team members.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I consciously do things to build team morale.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I cooperate with team members and concentrate with them on the current issues being faced by the team.	1	2	3	4	5
17. In teams, I stand up for things that are important to me, but I don't insist on getting my way in every thing discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
18. In teams, I pay attention to both the process of working as a team and the content or end goal that's expected from the team.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I actively participate in the work of the team and encourage others to do so.	1	2	3	4	5

20. I encourage the team to talk frankly about team members' schedules and set up checkpoints to ensure that all are contributing equally.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I keep sensitive information and information shared in confidence private.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I foster a climate where team members are supported for sharing their ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I encourage the team to establish and adhere to group operating and communication guidelines.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I try to use observational skills to monitor what's going on with the team.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I express support and acceptance of my team members by praising and seeking their ideas and conclusions.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I willingly accept others' feedback about my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I work with underperformers to keep them in the flow of the project and to prevent them from being excluded from the group.	1	2	3	4	5
28. As a team member, I am reliable and conscientious.	1	2	3	4	5
29. As a team member, I participate willingly.	1	2	3	4	5

Sum your circled responses. If your total is 87 or higher, you might want to explore ways to improve your skill in the area of working in teams.

Source: (De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider, 2002, 325)

## ***Appendix A #2: Bridge Building***

Teams will be given four paper cups, four paper plates, and three sheets of heavy freezer paper and tape. Their task is to build a bridge that is 8 inches high and 16 inches long and can withstand rolling a light ball across it. Groups of four-six are tasked with creating a bridge out of the materials provided. You have 30 minutes in which to complete this task. When the project is complete, or time is called—whichever comes first—your instructor will roll a ball across your bridge to ensure it meets the project specifications. Following this activity, discuss these questions in your group.

### **Questions**

1. How did your group decide how to build the bridge? Did it make a plan or did it Just start building?
2. Did anyone play a leadership role in the task? Explain.
3. What made building the bridge as a group, rather than as an individual, more difficult?
4. In what ways did the group make the project easier? Explain.

(Source: De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider, 2002, 324)

## Appendix B: Setting Ground Rules Exercise

### ***How I would like our team to be.***

What do you hope your learning team experience will be like? Jot a few wishes down in the spaces below.

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Discuss your wishes for your team experience with the rest of the group and make a list of commonly held wishes. Ensure everyone's list is heard and discussed.

Our Ground Rules:

Below are some ground rules that are helpful to learning teams. Check the four most important to you. Add others if you wish.

- ☐ Start on time with everyone present.
- ☐ Get to know members who are "different" from you.
- ☐ Let others finish without interrupting them.
- ☐ Be brief and to the point.
- ☐ Be sensitive to gender race and ethnicity.
- ☐ Be prepared.
- ☐ Give everyone a chance to speak
- ☐ Share the workload.
- ☐ Rotate facilitating and other responsibilities.
- ☐ Reach decisions by consensus.
- ☐ Make sure that team meetings are "processed" regularly.
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss these with your team-mates and come to consensus on the norms for your team.  
(Source: Silberman, 1998, 277)

## Appendix C: Team Roles Survey

### Team Roles Preferences Scale

**Purpose:** This self-assessment is designed to help you to identify your preferred roles in meetings and similar team activities.

**Instructions:** Read each of the statements below and circle the response that you believe best reflects your position regarding each statement. Then use the scoring key below to calculate your results for each team role. This exercise is completed alone so students can assess themselves honestly without concern of social comparison. However, class discussion will focus on the roles that people assume in team settings. This scale only assesses a few team roles.

Team Roles Preferences Scale					
Circle the number that best reflects your position regarding each of these statements	Does Not Describe Me at All	Does Not Describe Me Very Well	Describes Me Somewhat	Describes Me Well	Describes Me Very Well
1. I usually take responsibility for getting the team to agree on what the meeting should accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I tend to summarize to other team members what the team has accomplished so far.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I'm usually the person who helps other team members overcome their disagreements.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I try to ensure that everyone gets heard on issues.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I'm usually the person who helps the team determine how to organize the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I praise other team members for their ideas more than others do in the meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
7. People tend to rely on me to keep track of what has been said in meetings.	1	2	3	4	5

<b>8. The team typically counts on me to prevent debates from getting out of hand.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>9. I tend to day things that make the group feel optimistic about its accomplishments.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>10. Team members usually count on me to give everyone a chance to speak.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>11. In most meetings, I am less likely than others to “put down” the ideas of team mates.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>12. I actively help team mates to resolve their differences in meetings.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>13. I actively encourage quiet team members to describe their ideas on each issue.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>14. People tend to rely on me to clarify the purpose of the meeting.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>15. I like to be the person who takes notes or minutes of the meeting.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

Source: (McShane, 2004, 254-255)

## Appendix D: Self Assessment Surveys

### **Appendix D #1:     Assessing Yourself (Communication)**

Circle the response that most closely correlates with each item below.

	Agree	Neither	Disagree		
1. I ask for and give feedback as a way of clarifying meaning.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I pay attention to others by listening, reaffirming what I think I've heard, and by asking questions.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I strive for two-way communication.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I communicate orally when the subject matter is important and requires others' input.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I communicate in writing when the subject matter is complex or when I need documentation.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I communicate electronically when the message is brief, not negative, and doesn't require face-to-face communication,	1	2	3	4	5
7. I keep information I'm relaying on to an easily absorbable amount and speed.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I rebuild trust (if broken) before attempting to communicate,	1	2	3	4	5
9. I prepare thoroughly before communicating.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I focus my attention on one important communication at a time.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I proofread my written and electronic messages before sending.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I batch my responses to e-mail messages and phone calls,	1	2	3	4	5
13. I consciously communicate in a way that men and women can understand and respond favourably to.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I speak in a straightforward manner without filtering my messages,	1	2	3	4	5
15. I consider the emotional state of both the sender and receiver, and adapt my behaviour accordingly.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I speak directly and firmly, addressing my concerns without ignoring the needs of others.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I take responsibility for my statements rather than putting others on the defensive.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I send "I" messages when I communicate.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I clarify my assumptions about others while speaking with them,	1	2	3	4	5
20. I consider the needs and background of my audiences.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I don't phrase statement in the form of a question.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I match my nonverbal gestures and expressions with my verbal comments.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I take into account others' different learning styles when I speak.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I am straightforward and deal with issues head-on.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I am supportive of others.	1	2	3	4	5

If your score is 75 or greater, it may be helpful to create a plan to improve your verbal communication skills.

Source: (De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider, 2002, 95)

## Appendix D #2: Assessing Yourself (Feedback)

Circle the response that most closely correlates with each item below.

	Agree	Neither	Disagree		
1. I know how to give feedback to someone without making him or her feel defensive.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I regularly offer feedback to my team-mates/employees.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I let others know I am open to receiving and learning from their feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am aware of how to give feedback to persons from cultures different from mine.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I use feedback from others to assess my strengths and weaknesses and to develop self-improvement plans.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I know how to give constructive, as opposed to negative, feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I have a strong self-identity and am able to assess my own behaviour against judgments made about me by others.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am able to shake off unfounded negative feedback. I know how to not take it personally and move on.	1	2	3	4	5
9. On project assignments I build in automatic steps through which I can give and receive feedback from co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I make it a habit of debriefing with team-mates throughout a project's duration.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I evaluate each project at the end, assessing things that worked and things that didn't.	1	2	3	4	5
12. When giving myself feedback, I take into consideration the views of others as well as my own perspective.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I give feedback that is specific and purposeful, focused on only one or two topics at a time.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I give feedback that is documentable and timely.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I give feedback that is work-related and not personal—that is about the person's behaviour and not the person.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I give feedback that is descriptive, not prescriptive.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I give feedback on an ongoing basis rather than storing things up.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I give feedback that is constructive and balanced, not negative or critical.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I give feedback that could be construed as negative in private, not in front of others.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I give feedback in a way that is interactive—considering the needs of and dialoguing with the receiver.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I try to maintain a balanced view of my own capabilities (rather than one that is overly positive or overly negative). I do this by supplementing my own perspective with those of others and by comparing my results with my peers.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I have a strategy for giving feedback to those who don't accept feedback easily.	1	2	3	4	5
23. When preparing for a difficult feedback session, I prepare a script and strategy in advance.	1	2	3	4	5



24. When giving feedback, I offer help, support, suggestions, and alternatives to the person receiving the feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
25. When giving feedback, I specify the steps that are to be taken next or discuss this in collaboration with the receiver.	1	2	3	4	5
26. When giving feedback, I provide the receiver with context by mentioning the impact the person's behaviour is having on the person's co-workers or team-mates.					
28. When receiving feedback, I demonstrate openness to hearing the information and benefiting from it.					
28. When receiving feedback, I am willing to listen to the giver; I show understanding and ask clarifying questions.					
29. When receiving feedback, I don't react defensively.					
30. When receiving feedback, I control my emotions.					
31. When asking for feedback, I provide a rationale for why I want the feedback.					
32. When asking for feedback, I take responsibility for the quality of my work.					
33. When asking for feedback, I ask how I can improve.					
34. I keep an ongoing performance folder to document the contributions I am making to an organization or project.					
35. I evaluate my own progress on a regular basis.					
36. I inform someone in charge when personal problems are interfering with my ability to produce quality work.					
37. As a team member, I demonstrate to others that I value feedback and input from all who are affected by my performance.					
38. I ask for feedback when it's not forthcoming from my team members.					
39. I am not overly dependent on someone else's view of my performance.					
40. I ask for suggestions on how I can improve.					

If your score was greater than 120, you might consider making a specific plan to improve in this area.

Source: (De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider, 2002, 132)

### **Appendix D #3: The Team Player Inventory**

By: Theresa Kline, University of Calgary

**Purpose:** This exercise is designed to help you estimate the extent to which you are positively predisposed to work in teams.

**Instructions:** Read each of the statements below and circle the response that you believe best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. Then use the scoring key below to calculate your results for each scale. This exercise is completed alone so students can assess themselves honestly without concerns of social comparison. However, class discussion will focus on the characteristics of individuals who are more or less compatible with working in self-directed work teams.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that ....?	Completely disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree somewhat	Completely agree
1. I enjoy working on team projects					
2. Team projects work easily allows others not to 'pull their weight'.					
3. Work that is done as a team is better than the work done individually.					
4. I do my best work alone rather than in a team.					
5. Team work is overrated in terms of the actual results produced.					
6. Working in a team gets me to think more creatively.					
7. Teams are used too often when individual work would be more effective.					

<b>8. My own work is enhanced when I am in a team situation.</b>					
<b>9. My experiences working in team situations have been primarily negative.</b>					
<b>10. More solutions or ideas are generated when working in a team situation than working alone.</b>					

Source: (McShane, 2004, 275)

## Appendix E: Exercises to Promote Communication Skills

### ***Appendix E #1: Once Upon A Team***

#### **Objectives**

- To clarify core group values and norms
- To foster a spirit of teamwork and collaboration
- To practice creative thinking
- To improve communication spontaneity

#### **Uses**

- Values clarification
- Team building
- Leadership

#### **Art Forms**

- Storytelling
- Improvisation

#### **Time Required**

60 minutes

#### **Materials, Handouts, and Equipment**

- One copy of the *Once Upon a Team* handout for each participant
- One pen or pencil for each participant
- One flipchart for each group
- Two markers for each flipchart

#### **Procedure**

1. Distribute the *Once Upon a Team* handout and pens or pencils to members of small groups of four to seven people each.
2. Ask each group member to read the handout and fill in the blank spaces as indicated. They should not deliberate very long, but fill in the blanks as quickly as possible.
3. After everyone has finished, ask for volunteers to share their completed stories within their groups. If time is short, read at least three stories.
4. Tell the other group members to make notes about the team-related values represented by each story as it is read.
5. After all the stories have been read, tell the group members to review their notes.
6. Have each group analyze the values or norms represented in each story and record them on a flipchart (Some stories may need to be repeated.) Examples of value and norm topics

include trust, communication, leadership, power, freedom, fear, self-sufficiency, cooperation, competition, defensiveness, empowerment, and friendship.

7. Instruct the groups to review all the values listed, organize them into common clusters, and discuss any implications for team collaboration.

## Discussion

Use the following questions to lead a discussion with all participants:

*How easy was it to think of answers to fill in the blanks?*

*Why was it easy or difficult?*

- Were the stories mostly serious or humorous? Why was that?
- What seemed to be the most frequently mentioned values?
- What values were not mentioned that you believe should have been?
- What did you learn about your group or individuals in it that you did not know before?
- What were the most significant implications for team collaboration?

## Variations

1. Have the groups create their own stories with blanks for other groups to fill in.
2. Have members of each group fill in the blanks as an entire unit, rather than individually.

**Once Upon a Team:** Complete the blanks in the following story:

"Once upon a time, there were \_\_\_\_\_ employees who worked in the \_\_\_\_\_  
[number] [department or work unit]

[number]

[department or work unit]

for \_\_\_\_\_. Sometimes they were very happy when \_\_\_\_\_ happened; other  
[company/organization] [event]

[company/organization]

[event]

times they were very \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_ happened. Some team members believed

[emotion] [event]

[emotion]

[event]

that the team \_\_\_\_\_ very well during this times; others, however, thought that the

[action verb]

\_\_\_\_\_ needed to improve its \_\_\_\_\_. The team manager was a very  
[noun] [noun]

[noun]

[noun]

\_\_\_\_\_ person who always seemed to \_\_\_\_\_ the team whenever they  
[adjective] [verb]

[adjective]

[verb]

\_\_\_\_\_. One day, \_\_\_\_\_ decided to \_\_\_\_\_ the team that [action  
verb, past tense] [person or group] [verb]

verb, past tense]

[person or group]

[verb]

it must \_\_\_\_\_ its \_\_\_\_\_. Most team members \_\_\_\_\_ very

[action verb] [noun] [were/were not]

[action verb]

[noun]

[were/were not]

\_\_\_\_\_ with this \_\_\_\_\_. In fact, most reacted \_\_\_\_\_. However,

[adjective] [noun] [adverb]

[adjective]

[noun]

[adverb]

the \_\_\_\_\_ seemed to change whenever \_\_\_\_\_ happened. It was then that

[noun] [event]

[noun]

[event]

the team \_\_\_\_\_ it must work harder at \_\_\_\_\_. And so they lived

[verb] [action verb]

[verb]

[action verb]

\_\_\_\_\_ ever after. The \_\_\_\_\_.  
[action verb, past tense] [noun]

[action verb, past tense]

[noun]

## ***Appendix E #2: Giving Positive Feedback***

Source: (Vangundy & Naiman, 2003, 205-207)

### Giving Positive Feedback

1. Divide into working teams.
2. Appoint a timekeeper and recorder.
3. Working first on your own, on small pieces of paper or index cards write one team member's name on each card. On the other side, write a positive statement about the team member.
4. Working in teams or small groups, each team member takes a turn sharing his or her positive feedback with the other team members, and handing the person the card on which they've written the positive statement. Repeat the process until all feedback is shared and all cards have been received.
5. As a group, discuss the feedback. What surprised you? What did you learn about yourself? What are some things you heard about others that you'd like to improve? What are some qualities you would like the team to improve?
6. As a group, summarize the feedback. Without revealing names, have the recorder compose a list of (or write on the board) the positive qualities most mentioned, and a list of things team members have said they'd like to work on as a group.
7. Report your summary findings to the large group.
8. Discuss the qualities that make for effective team leadership and how one can improve these qualities.

Source: (De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider, 2002, 133)

## Appendix E #3

### Peer Feedback

1. Divide into working teams.
2. Complete a "peer feedback sheet" on each team member. Check the three to five areas in which a team member is demonstrating superior, exemplar performance, and the three to five areas in which a team member could improve. At the bottom of the sheet offer examples that back up each assertion made in the checklist. Complete a feedback sheet for each member of the team, including yourself.
3. Share the positive aspects of each team member with the group. Hand the papers out so each individual can read in private about areas in which he or she can improve,
4. Discuss the findings and determine ways you can work together to support each other in developing exemplar characteristics as a team.

### Peer Feedback

To:

From:

Item	Exemplar	Improve
1. Enthusiasm/attitude	_____	_____
2. Motivation/willingness to work	_____	_____
3. Responsibility/accountability	_____	_____
4. Effort	_____	_____
5. Completion/quality of assigned tasks	_____	_____
6. Punctuality	_____	_____
7. Ability to meet deadlines	_____	_____
8. Dedication to team	_____	_____
9. Attendance/participation	_____	_____
10. Sharing of ideas and feedback	_____	_____
11. Communication with team	_____	_____
12. Creativity	_____	_____
13. Accuracy	_____	_____
14. Respect for others	_____	_____
15. Flexibility	_____	_____
16. Ability to get along with team	_____	_____
17. Organization	_____	_____
18. Ability to create group "synergy"	_____	_____
19. Leadership	_____	_____
20. Other (specify): _____	_____	_____

Source: (De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider, 2002, 134-135)



## Appendix F: Conflict Survey & Exercises

### **Appendix F #1: Assessing Yourself (Conflict)**

Circle the response that most closely correlates with each item below.

	Agree	Neither	Disagree		
1. I confront conflict rather than avoid it.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am not afraid of conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I understand the difference between positive and negative conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I know how to deal with conflict constructively.	1	2	3	4	5
5. In a group or work situation, I create a climate that supports constructive conflict and encourages differing ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I don't overreact when conflict develops and have a strategy to use when conflict does occur.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I accommodate others when the relationship is more important to me than the issue.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I use compromise as a back-up conflict strategy when appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I use collaboration as a conflict strategy when the issue is important and both parties have the time necessary to deal with the conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I view conflict as a positive force for change.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I use a collaborative approach when dealing with conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I consider the source of the conflict as well as my goals and the type of relationship I have with the person before developing a strategy for dealing with the conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I avoid conflict if the situation is minor or emotions are high.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am able to control my temper in a conflict situation.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I focus on learning about the issues involved before attempting to resolve a conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I understand the types of strategies available to deal with conflicts and know how to select a strategy that is appropriate for the situation.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I focus on changing behaviours, not people.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I pick my battles.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I search for common ground in conflict situations.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I work toward win-win solutions whenever possible.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I have acquired skills and training to help me know how to manage conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I understand the role of team building in reducing conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I appreciate diversity and don't let differences with others lead to unnecessary conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I respect the legitimacy of others' views.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I help others avoid unnecessary strife.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I use communication techniques that can keep conflict from occurring or manage conflict once it does occur.	1	2	3	4	5

27. I use techniques geared toward others—focusing on their needs or objections or appealing to their interests—to reduce the occurrence of conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I use limit setting and consequences (when appropriate) to manage others' expectations and reduce the chances that conflict will occur.	1	2	3	4	5

Sum your circled responses. If your total is 54 or higher, you might want to explore ways to improve your skill in the area of conflict management.

Source: (De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider, 2002, 254)

## ***Appendix F #2: Conflict Management Exercise: Humpty Dumpty's Spaceship Challenge***

In teams of three to six, create a spaceship for Humpty Dumpty (an egg) that will withstand the gravitational forces that occur during a three-foot drop. The spaceship that withstands the highest drop will be the winner. If there is a tie, then the winner will be the spaceship fabricated out of the greatest number of materials. Each spaceship must be fabricated out of at least three materials. Each team only has possession of one material, so you will need to negotiate with other teams to acquire new materials.

Your team will be given 10 minutes to plan your spaceship design. You are to decide what material your spaceship will be made from and determine which teams you will need to negotiate with for materials.

Your team will be given 20 minutes to negotiate material and construct the spaceship. Negotiate as effectively as you possibly can; use any strategies or tactics.

### **Questions**

1. Before approaching your opponents, how did you prepare for the negotiation process?
2. Did you use the same conflict-handling styles for all opponents that you negotiated with? Explain.
3. In this situation, which conflict-handling styles were most successful? Why?
4. Did every negotiation work out exactly as you planned and hoped? Why or why not?
5. What factors helped you in the negotiation process? What could you have done differently to make your negotiations more successful?
6. In performing this exercise, what lessons did you learn about negotiation? How does this exercise relate to negotiations in the "real world"?

Source: (De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider, 2002, 258)

## **Appendix F #3: 2 Case Studies**

### **Case Study # 1**

As freshman year came to a close, I looked forward to moving onto the main campus and to living with five other girls whom I thought of as my friends. At that time I had no idea as to what I was getting myself into. We all had been friends freshman year, but I guess I did not know them well enough to suspect that there might be some problems. My biggest concern is their disrespectfulness. They not only disrespect our shared living room, but they also disrespect my personal belongings. They are very inconsiderate of my feelings. Three of them are probably the dirtiest people I have ever met. I am not saying that I am super clean, but I am not dirty. I may make a mess or two and clean it up, but I am not dirty. These girls, my suitemates, leave their garbage all over the suite room: soda cans, potato chip bags, and half-eaten melted ice cream cartons. It is absolutely disgusting and it makes me very angry. No one ever takes out the garbage or the recycling except me. I know that I should not accept this dirty habit, but I have a difficult time of standing up for myself and being assertive.

The other way that they are disrespectful is that they go through my personal items when I am not around and often take things, especially my food. I usually do not mind when people use my things, but a little courtesy to ask permission goes a long way. It has gotten to the point where I have to hide my food and other personal items that I don't want them to touch.

1. What is your immediate reaction to the scenario? How would you feel if you were the person writing about this situation?
2. How could this situation have been avoided?
3. What approaches to resolving this conflict are appropriate?
4. What are some things that, if done, would make this approach successful?
5. What are some things to avoid when attempting to resolve this conflict? Why?

### **Case Study #2**

My boss and I are having some interpersonal problems. There are several things that he does that I find really annoying. To start, he is not considerate of my employees or me. I often find myself thinking that I would be reluctant to do the things he does around me that annoy me. Yet he's my boss so what can I do? He comes in late to the office, after my co-workers and I have been working for a while and have our day planned. Inevitably he'll come in, interrupt, and lay on us a whole new set of priorities for the day. To be fair, he does stay late (we have flextime in our office) and he has a good reason to be late—he has child care responsibilities to fulfill on school mornings. But his habit of coming in and interrupting the schedule for our day is really off-putting. By the time I've listened to his concerns, reprioritized my and my staff's work, and gotten back on track, it's almost lunchtime and I feel I've wasted almost a half day trying to respond to his concerns. I'm afraid to confront him—he's a good guy and it would only put him on the defensive. And wouldn't really change anything. But I'm also tired of not feeling productive. I just wish he would be a little more sensitive to our situation and be better organized and more aware of our time constraints. Is that asking too much?

1. What is your immediate reaction to the scenario? How would you feel if you were the person writing about this situation?
2. How could this situation have been avoided?
3. What approaches to resolving this conflict are appropriate?
4. What are some things that, if done, would make this approach successful?
5. What are some things to avoid when attempting to resolve this conflict? Why?

Source: (De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider, 2002, 255)

## ***Appendix F #4: Conflict Role-Plays***

In small groups, role-play one or more of the following scenarios. Perform them in the small group or in front of the large group or class. For each scenario acted out, analyze and discuss:

1. What strategies were used?
2. What attitudes were depicted?
3. What worked and why?
4. What didn't and why?

### **Scenarios**

1. You and your roommate are in disagreement over how clean to keep the apartment.
2. You and your parents disagree on whether you should have a car at school.
3. You think one of your employees is harassing another employee sexually.
4. Two of your employees are unable to agree on anything in staff meetings.
5. One of your co-workers is accepting gifts from a supplier; this is forbidden by your company's policy.
6. You think a fellow swimmer is cheating in competitions.

Source: (De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider, 2002, 256)