3.3.2 Weekly Progress Report (Project Management components)

Weekly Progress Reports are discussed more fully in Section 7.6 of this Course Manual. The first Weekly Progress Report is due in Week 3 of the subject. Here, we address the teambuilding components of this report. These reports typically take either a memo format, in which progress is described using prose with accompanying tables and figures, or presentation format with bulleted lists, tables and figures as appropriate. Depending on the format used, a short paragraph (~0.5 pg) or slide is expected that addresses Section 4 ("Team") issues. Specific instructions for what to include in Section 4 on a weekly basis are summarized here; more information may be found at the Project Management website, under Module &7, 7.4. And 7.4.a. Activity Lists for the week are added to "Work to be Done".

Module 7.4.a Weekly Progress Report Example #1

Rotation 1

Example Week 3

How is your Project Leader managing the team?

Literature Search Ground Rule System

Active Listening

Team Life Cycles

The library session was useful. We changed our literature search ground rules. Using a CI meeting example of listing a few useful components of a paper's summary for our proposal. We first read the papers listed in last year's final report, giving us a good overview and a summary of the motivation behind our project. This was useful because the team lacked a clear understanding of what technical concepts should be studied to benefit our project.

To move past the formation stage, the leader boosted team morale by bringing snacks to meetings and generating ideas for team bonding, which strengthened our interpersonal relationships, allowing us to move past criticizing each other. The leader established the project objective giving our work in lab, in the team and faculty meetings more direction, helping us to envision a better experimental plan and writing the proposal. The criticism stage started out well. We were united in terms of our project goal and team culture. During the beginning of this stage, the various individual strengths of each person were established. The roadblock to move past this stage was lack of communication, including when teammates failed to communicate lateness or absence for a meeting. Even efforts to text our teammates that we would be late were thwarted by the fact that the lab was in the sub-basement of building 66, where no one had a signal. Used Facebook messaging 10-15 minutes prior to the meeting or lab session if one anticipated tardiness or absence increasing communication.

Example Week 4

Situational Leadership

Logical Framework

The situational leadership low effectiveness results is disconcerting because using the styles effectively will lead us through solving difficult problems. Therefore, we are compensating by learning our primary styles of leadership and using a more

effective style. For instance the leader has been using delegating and directing more, which is benefiting our effectiveness.

The leader is still quite unclear as to the scope and details of our project and is not a very assertive leader but as we settled in she is more directive and coaching. She is learning to use delegation through the creation of Activity Lists and the team is becoming more effective. Designing the bridge helped to see how quickly the leader needs to change styles during designing a project.

Creating a logical framework allowed us to break down the complex problem we were given into more tangible goals, giving us confidence in our abilities to solve the problem timely. It also taught us about how to measure success, allowing us to motivate each other to implement the project. In our logical framework we planned out our entire project and motivations. The logical framework is ingrained in our mindsets; we know where we need to go and how to get there. Quantifying goals was the most important exercise in the framework because the goals are clear and attainable. The framework has definitely proved to be useful toward team bonding as we work together to define our goals and moving towards a successful project.

Example Week 5

Conflict Management Ground Rules

Team Life Cycle

We are in the criticism stage; the expectation that members contribute and be responsible for their assigned work was compromised. At meetings, R is often silent. This is especially a problem when a question is posed by another team member about where the project should progress because it demonstrates her lack of regard for her peers who are depending on her just as much as she is depending on them to achieve success in this project. When addressed D cited her responsibility to take good minutes as the reason why she was not actively participating. To combat this we have decided to adopt a period of "breathing time" to allow everyone to process the discussion up to a certain point and afterwards, D can articulate her ideas without the distraction of taking notes. We changed our meeting ground rules to reflect this change.

We changed our conflict management system so we no longer avoid member's tension and frustration and are providing feedback to each other during lab and deciding on the proposal content. Tasks are divided when possible by the team's strengths and weaknesses. B's positive accommodating nature has brought fresh enthusiasm, especially as we begin to collect data. The leader is being more directive. C asks questions and offers his opinions making him proficient at collaborating rather than avoiding. We argued about the direction of the proposal and instead of avoiding we collaborated settling the issue quickly before it could escalate into needing mediation.

Example Week 6

Writing the Proposal

Executing the Oral Presentation

Time Management Issues

Activity Lists

The proposal ensured we individually understand the project's scope and objectives. By writing the proposal we gained understanding of each other's writing styles before writing collaboratively. We had to change our ground rules; we didn't read each other's draft Proposals. Our content was similar due to indepth discussions and the implementation of the rest of the ground rules. Because of the large workload better time management is needed. The rules are updated. Before the oral presentation, we

slightly regressed into the criticism stage. There is some major conflict on how the oral presentation workload is being handled. We have differences in viewpoints; ground rules were broken. We plan to meet to revise the rules to settle our differences. One rule will be that the presenter will submit an outline the first week of the rotation with tasks for each member.
Activity lists helped the team organize weekly. All members reviewed them before lab and before the team meeting. Due to unexpected results in lab the tasks deviated from those listed on the Lists but the leader approved changes before implementation. Lists are used during team and faculty meetings to discuss the plans and changes. The listing of the deadlines and estimated time for completion also helped team members to stay on top of deadlines. Included in our Activity Lists is a section called "Future Dates" which are large tasks that need to be started well in advanced of the deadline or that require some other kind of long range planning.

Rotation 2

Example Week 7

How is your Project Leader leading the team?
Mission Statement
Team Life Cycle

Our mission statement sums up the goals of our project and is referenced to keep our team focused. It is stated in our written report, oral presentation and weekly report. When we had to re-assess the progress of our project and re-evaluate the scope of our project, the mission statement was referenced often to keep the bigger-picture of the project in mind throughout this time. It helped as a driving force for designing the alternate plan of action following the change in the scope of our project.
The leader quickly gained the trust of the team by having efficient meetings. The leader focused on changing his leadership style from coaching to delegating so that each member was able to do his/her tasks regularly. The leader sent out reminders prior to when weekly progress reports were due as well as other deliverables. The team meetings follow a logical order and everyone contributes during these meetings. The meetings are used to re-orient our direction for the project and bring up any noteworthy updates, so we have treated team meetings as such, which was a fruition of the team during the formation stage and into the criticism stage. The team is in the Synthesis Stage. Tasks are now being delegated more efficiently, allowing members to utilize their strengths and work on their weaknesses. B utilized his editing strengths to take the information from our proposals and write the introduction and methods. Rather than deferring to C's strength of calibrating the UV/VIS, I learned to calibrate. Using my data analysis skills I created tables and plots to analyze data.

Week 8 Spring Break

Example Week 9

Team Life Cycle
Writing the Progress Report Collaboratively
Time Management Issues

Progress Report ground rules need changes. The deadlines not well defined, and team members confused. Advisor disliked draft. There were many inconsistent sentences and grammatical errors. New rules were instituted. Due to the time conflicts in our schedules, the timeline created for the Progress Report Draft was not followed and the editing fell to the leader. The leader, following the Ground Rules, did the final edit. Our ground rules after the proposal changed to creating a rough outline of what content should be included in each of the sections. We assigned sections based on the strengths and weaknesses. For editing, each member made comments on the

document and member read comments on his/her section. Changes were made or content clarified as to why change were unnecessary. Leader did a final edit. These changes were not effective; report contained run-on sentences and errors. We implemented a more rigorous system. After each person edited their section, team edited for consistency and organization.

Team is in criticism stage. The leader will actively boost the morale of struggling teammates in order to ensure progress toward implementation of our goals. Changes to ground rules:

1. Leader responsible for proactively assigning work to team; will send reminders.
2. Team will devote adequate time to help oral presenter prepare.
3. Leader confirms meeting times through Facebook at least 24 hours in advance.
4. Recorder updates Calendar when changes are made to meeting times etc.

We believe that these rules will advance us into the Synthesis Stage.

Rotation 3

Example Week 10

TKI Conflict Styles results
MBTI Team results
Dominant Conflict Styles on the Team – Benefits and Weaknesses
Principled Negotiations
Sharing the Team Experience

We discussed our Dominant conflict styles: "compromiser team with secondary characteristics of an avoider team." Benefits are avoiding petty issues and by compromising we save time not contemplating unrealistic solutions. Overusing these styles causes us to avoid differences until a larger conflict ensues, then we compromise rather than finding a collaborative solution. We avoid conflicts that have emotional ties. We plan when making significant decisions to choose the best route rather than the familiar route. Using avoidance and compromise contributed to a relatively productive criticism phase. Problems were not overlooked and did not escalate.

As an ISTP team our similarity index is 85%. We easily express ourselves and easily understand each other. We have excellent communication. Our results indicate that an ISTP team generally prepares before starting a project and that procedures are created to minimize the amount of work later. This is consistent with how our team performs.

Sharing and hearing other team's experiences was helpful because we advised other teams about problems we already solved; i.e. getting conflicting advice from faculty and industrial consultants. We advised a team to get a third opinion because when we sought more opinions on lab procedures and decisions we were successful. We also learned what wasn't working on other teams. A team was dealing poorly with time pressures by neglecting initially agreed upon writing ground rules and didn't allow time for edits. We discussed this and decided to focus on sticking to our established ground rules even under time constraints.

Example Week 11

Individual Strengths and Weaknesses
Logical Framework
Team Life Cycle

Taking into consideration the suggestions of previous leaders the leader is delegating tasks to members depending on their strengths and weaknesses, which are now well established. During a team meeting we reiterated our expectations in the project and whether we have met or not met those expectations. What we discovered

was that we did not even start with the same expectations for the class. Example here. This helped us to understand the differing levels of interest and passion when it came to talking about the various aspects of the project. Communication was not as strong as it should have been at the accomplishment stage, but this is an area that is being actively improved by the leader as we head towards the completion stage. This past Thursday, after our last lab session, we sat together to review the Logical Framework and to talk about what we have accomplished this semester and what we had hoped to accomplish. The talk allowed us to face the situation that while there was still so much more we had wanted to test and understand, this was the stage we had reached and the amount that we had accomplished this semester was plenty. This gave us motivation to write a good final report so that next year's team will not be delayed by the technical concepts that are not explained clearly. A lunch is scheduled with our teaching assistant and faculty advisor to draw the semester to a close.

Example Week 12
Writing the Final Report
Oral Presentation

The leader discussed with other leaders how they wrote their final reports to find out how to create an effective timeline. A timeline was created. Members were given sections to gain experience writing every aspect of a technical paper. The timeline was effective but the new division of work was not. The Ground Rules were not followed. One member misunderstood how to write their section, resulting in additional work to compile the sections. The leader had to clarify incorrectly described technical concepts and correct grammatical errors. Additionally, during the report outline meeting, including specific figures was decided. The member included erroneous figures and left out figures that were crucial to the report. The final edit was overwhelming.

Each member prepared a concrete outline, making it easier to discuss and create a master outline. An idea on everyone's outline was added to the master outline, reducing discussion to whether one person's idea was worth including. Each side gave their argument and consensus was reached by referencing our overall objectives. We allotted more time for editing and rehearsing the presentation because we learned other teams improved their presentations by allotting more time for editing and rehearsing. Delay in data analysis meant certain parts of the presentation were delayed. In these cases we did as much as we could with the current information and results we had. We also used our strengths to support the presenter. We all felt we were strong editors and not as strong in producing initial first drafts.