

Teamwork

Future success in Engineering, as well as any other field, requires developing positive teaming skills. Therefore, ENGR 107, as the cornerstone course in a student's study of Engineering at George Mason University, assigns teaming skills a high priority. The following describes basic expectations and assessment of a student's performance in a team situation.

Team Member Responsibilities

The most important team activity for the individual member is to share responsibility. The team member shares responsibilities with the others to increase the team's effectiveness and to insure its success. Individual team members must assess team progress and participate in improving team performance. Flexibility and cooperation on the part of the individual team members is required for the team to be effective. Finally, the team members must be able to communicate in a clear concise manner in all three modes - writing, speaking and graphics.

Team Member Traits

When individuals work together on a team to achieve a common goal, they can be extremely effective. The team interaction promotes productivity for several different reasons. First, meeting together is synergistic in that one's ideas freely expressed stimulates additional ideas by other members on the team. The net result is many more original ideas than would have been possible by the same group of individuals working independently. Acting together the team can build on the strengths of each individual.

There is a set of characteristics that describes a good team member and another set that depicts an individual that can destroy the efforts of a team. The characteristics of a good team member are:

1. Respects other team members without question.
2. Listens carefully to the other team members.
3. Participates but does not dominate.
4. Self-confident but not dogmatic.
5. Comfortable with his or her disciplinary skill level.
6. Communicates effectively in all three modes.
7. Contributes equally to team endeavors and takes initiative whenever possible.

The characteristics of a destructive team member are:

1. Shows lack of respect for others.

2. Stimulates confrontation.
3. Dominant personality type, tries to intimidate..
4. Talks all the time but does not listen.
5. Overcritical.
6. Does not communicate effectively.
7. Does not participate in group activities.

Comparison of an individual's traits with those listed above, will show characteristics from both the good and bad lists. To be effective, team members must work to enhance the favorable traits and to suppress those that are destructive to the efforts of the team.

Assessment

Team skills and effort will be a factor of the grade for any team activity. Historically, team member evaluation of the others in a team has proven to be extremely accurate. Students have shown that they are both honest and fair in their evaluations. Team member evaluations have been consistent within teams. Therefore, student evaluation of themselves and team members will be one factor in the total assessment.

At the end of the project, students will submit a written response to the items listed below for each team member, including self.

- ▶ Describe the actual contribution of each member of the team, including themselves.
- ▶ Describe the attitude of each member of the team, including themselves, toward the activity.
- ▶ Describe the effort put into the activity by each member of the team, including themselves.

In addition, students will assign a letter grade to each member of the team, including themselves, for each of the following: quantity of contribution to the team, quality of contribution to the team, and participation in team efforts. The grades will be submitted in tabular form accompanied by a written justification for each grade.