

Tips for a Fantastic Learning Team Experience

Malcolm Knowles, the “Father of Adult Learning Theory,” stated, “As a learning organization there is a need to understand the needs and to meet the needs of our students. The major problems of our age deal with human relations; the solutions can be found only in education. Skill in human relations is a skill that that must be learned; it is learned in the home, in the school, in the church, on the job, and wherever people gather together in small groups” (Informal Adult Education, 1950, p. 13).

Here are some internal and external resources we have compiled for you:

- √ Learning Team Handbook, Warner Pacific website: <http://adp.warnerpacific.edu>
- √ Personal Assessment links (learning styles, team dynamics, etc.)
 - American Education Services. (2009). *Learning styles quiz*. Retrieved April 2, 2009 from http://www.petersons.com/education_planner/discovering_article.asp?sponsor=2859&articleName=Learning_Styles_Quiz.
 - Fleming, N. D. (2007). *VARC: A guide to learning styles*. Retrieved April 2, 2009 from <http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire>.
 - Literacy Works. (n.d.) *Multiple intelligences for adult literacy and education*. Retrieved April 2, 2009 from <http://www.literacyworks.org/mi/assessment/index.html>.
 - Smith, M. K. (2005). *Bruce W. Tuckman: Forming, storming, norming, and performing in groups*. Retrieved April 1, 2009 from <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/tuckman.htm>
- √ Conflict Resolution
 - At Warner Pacific College, our model for conflict resolution is based in Matthew 18:15, which states, “If a brother or sister sins against you, go and point out the fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over” (Today’s New International Version, 2005). In other words, *resolve the problem closest to the problem*. Go to your teammate directly and seek reconciliation through open, honest discussion and problem solving. Here are some great online resources for conflict resolution:
 - Albright, C. (2006). *Ten tips for managing conflict, tension and anger*. Retrieved April 2, 2009 from <http://mentalhealth.about.com/cs/selfhelp/a/tentips.htm>.
 - University of Arizona. (n.d.). *Managing and resolving conflict*. Retrieved April 2, 2009 from http://hr2.hr.arizona.edu/06_jcl/jobdesc/groundrules.htm.

Your instructors, as well as your academic counselor, are resources for you when team challenges arise. Do not hesitate to make use of the support available to you!

Notes:

Words of Wisdom about learning teams from your Academic Counselors

Meg DuMez: *Be honest about who you are and what you need. The words ‘To thine own self be true’ are more than a quote from Shakespeare, in fact they are a challenge to be open and honest with yourself and others. Sometimes this will mean uncomfortable conversations within your team, but there is great value in being a real person in the real world. Allow others to know the real you; let them benefit from your strengths and support you through struggles. Be strong and courageous, knowing that you are not alone.*

Megan Enos: *Show up! Be present physically, emotionally, and intellectually for your team. You will come to rely on each other not only for ideas, papers, and presentations, but also for moral support in celebration and in challenge. Powerful teams are comprised of the essence of what it means to be human: relationship. It’s no wonder teams are a best practice in education as well as in the workplace! Healthy, effective relationships exist only when each member – each participant (in the truest sense) – is present.*

Ruth Knott: *On vacation a couple of years ago, my family and I carried our beach cooler smack dab into the middle of a sandcastle contest. Some individuals worked on their own project seemingly oblivious to others around them. Others labored side by side moating their masterpieces together at the last moment. Some groups obviously had predesigned plans with job descriptions. But the showcase of the day featured the Hansen family with T-shirts declaring their identity and purpose. The gigantic, seaweed-breathing dragon? Nothing less than spectacular! But more than a working group, the Hansens had achieved the status of High Performance Team. The lesson? Discover your team’s unique performance challenge. Move towards your team members risking trust, conflict, commitment and accountability with attention to results (principles from Patrick Lencioni *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, p.97, 2002). Step into your Learning Team with courage and determination. Truly engaging to make yours a high performance team could be one of the most marketable skills you learn here at Warner Pacific.*

Cathy Peterson: *Communication in a respectful, affirming manner is just one of the hallmarks of an effective and healthy team. People love bouquets of praise and can handle bad news if it is presented in a caring way. Be purposeful in setting common goals with your teammates. Help one another be accountable to those goals and follow through on your own commitments to the team. At the same time, do not be afraid to ask for help or go the extra mile to help another team member as needed. Be flexible and adapt, recognizing diversity brings strength to your team. Seek out and find the best in others for they too, are working to stretch beyond their comfort zones to improve their lives.*

Chris Tokonitz: *Thomas Edison was once asked why he had a team of 21 assistants, to which he replied “If I could solve all the problems myself, I would.” These powerful, yet simple words, illustrate the basis for our learning teams here at Warner Pacific. Together you can do more than apart; meaning, working together in your learning teams you will be able to tackle the myriad of projects in all of your courses, soaring to greater heights of success, than you would on your own. To make this successful, you have to be willing to trust, be flexible, adaptable, graceful, honest, and secure in knowing this process is worth the effort you put into it. Remember that the acronym of TEAM means: Together Everyone Achieves More.*

Danielle Van Dissel: *Perspective and grace are important components when dealing with interpersonal relationships. There is much change occurring in our lives and within an accelerated program. It is important during this educational journey to not only retain perspective and offer grace but also to embrace change, diversity, and the challenges to foster inner growth as well as develop team skills. The secret of success for learning teams entails creating common goals, committing to these goals, and focusing on these goals to meet deadlines. It is also important to celebrate the successes along the way!*