

University Foundation Study

Team-Working

Course Book

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with Jennifer Book

Skills Map

Unit 1

Teamwork in action

Find out about the different skills and roles involved in teamwork by taking part in an active teamwork exercise.

Unit 2

Why teamwork?

Explore the benefits and potential problems of teamwork.

Unit 3

Effective team membership

Examine verbal and non-verbal strategies for participating in a team discussion.

Unit 4

Interactive dialogue

Consider differences in culture and interaction patterns that may affect teamwork.

Unit 5

Encouraging interaction

Consider what sort of strategies and techniques encourage and discourage effective team participation.

Unit 6

Ways of working with others

Become more aware of the benefits of collaborative study.

Destination: Team-Working

- understand key considerations when working in teams;
- be more aware of how team-working involves and develops different skills.

Task 1 Factors to consider when working as a team

- what you understand by *greater than the sum of those individual parts*;
- factors to take into account when working as a team. (Think about individual abilities, setting, time factors, etc.);
- your own preferences for working alone or as part of a team.

4 Task: Team-Working - Unit 1 - Teamwork in action

Task 2 Do a teamwork activity

You are now going to complete some puzzles, working as a team, and then reflect on how effectively your team was able to carry out tasks.

2.1 Work in groups of four or five. Choose one member of the group to be an observer. You have 20 minutes to complete 16 puzzles. Your tutor will time you.

Team task

Work together to find a solution to each puzzle and explain your conclusions.

Observer's task

Evaluate the team-working skills of your group and make notes on the answer sheet on the next page. Refer to the answer sheet for the puzzles during the observation.

- a) This time last week I was the owner of a CD player, 100 CDs, 20 records and 50 videotapes. On Saturday night I came home to find that a burglar had taken all but ten of the CDs, 12 of the records and 40 of the videotapes. How many CDs have I got left?
- b) What can be found in the middle of Paris, which can't be found in London or Milan?
- c) One man carries three sacks of corn on his back, and another has four sacks on his back. Which of them has the heavier load?
- d) When the fire alarm rang in the ten-storey office where he works, John didn't go down the stairs, but jumped out of the nearest window. How did he survive?
- e) If it takes three minutes for an egg to boil in a two-litre pan of saltwater, how long will it take to boil three eggs in the same pan?
- f) If you have a bucket of water (A) at 10 degrees centigrade and another bucket (B) at 10 degrees Fahrenheit, and drop a 20-pence coin into each, which coin will be the first to reach the bottom of the bucket?
- g) When asked which half of an apple he would like, 12-year-old Simon replied, 'the bigger half'. On hearing this, his 13-year-old sister Lucy, who had been studying superlatives at school, replied, 'What you mean is the biggest half'. Who was right?
- h) After passing her driving test, Clare was on her way home, feeling very proud and not really focusing on where she was going. She went straight across a zebra crossing and the wrong way up a one-way street. Her driving instructor and a policewoman saw her, but they didn't stop her or seem surprised. Why?
- i) The number of bacteria in a large sealed jar doubles every minute. An hour after the first bacterium was put into the jar and sealed in, the jar was full. When was it half full?
- j) The verb 'to be' is extraordinary in that it has three different singular forms: 'I am', 'you are', 'he/she/it is'. Is it ever possible to say 'I is'?
- k) Even if we never win a gold medal at the Olympics, or get into the *Guinness Book of World Records*, there is one record that each person holds at one point in his or her life. What is it?



- l) How many new US\$10 bills, measuring 5 inches by 2 inches, could you fit without overlapping between pages 33 and 34 of a hardback book measuring 10 inches by 6 inches?
- m) There are four pairs of blue socks and three pairs of red socks in a drawer. In the dark, how many socks must you take out of the drawer to be sure of getting a matching pair?
- n) What is twice two-thirds of three-quarters of ten?
- o) In the first week of the summer harvest, Farmer Smith put six hay bales in one field and five in another. Each week during the four-week-long harvest, he added six hay bales to each field. How many piles of hay would he end up with if, at the end of the harvest, he put them all together in one field?
- p) Imagine you are an alien who has managed to learn the English language, but does not know the significance of the days of the week. Think about the English names for days of the week. On which day of the week would you assume:
- you would cook a meal?
 - you would have to make decisions?
 - you would get married?
 - it would be unusually bright?



	Observer's comments
Did all the members of the team contribute or did some members dominate?	
What were the team's strengths and weaknesses?	
What techniques did they use to solve the problems?	
How well did the team keep to time?	
What was the team's score?	

2.2 Debrief: Follow the instructions below.

Observer's task

Give the team the answers and feedback.

Team task

Respond to the comments made by the observer. Use the following questions to help you focus.

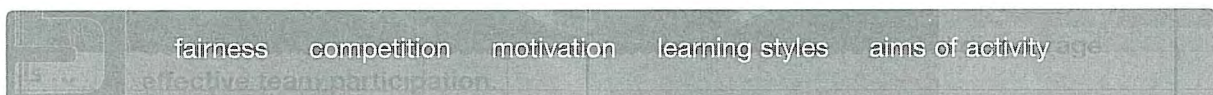
- Do you agree with the observer?
- Would the task have gone better if some members of the group had changed their roles?
- How effectively did the group work as a team?

Task 3 What have you learned about roles and teamwork?

3.1 Imagine you are managing a team of five in a business situation. In your teams, decide how you would allocate roles for different members of the team. Choose one of the following situations and give reasons.

- a) designing a car
- b) finding out about a competitor's product
- c) organising a conference

3.2 Discussion: In your teams, devise a set of five rules for working as a team. Think about the points below to help your discussion.



Reflect

Think about the team activity you carried out. What do you feel was the most memorable aspect of it? Has it changed any of your ideas about working in a team?

Evaluate your team's performance and how well you participated. Work out what your strengths are and what you need to work on to improve your team-working skills.

Student notes for Unit 1

Unit 2 Why teamwork?

At the end of this unit you will:

- be more aware of the benefits and potential problems of working in a team.

Task 1 What are the benefits of teamwork?

If we look at the creative, academic and political worlds, it is clear that teamwork plays an important role. It is useful to focus on the benefits of working in teams to improve your own ability to participate in a team.

- 1.1 Work in groups of three. Think of a talented individual whom you admire, for example, a film star, a musician or a politician. Fill in the following grid. You have ten minutes.



	Name of individual _____
1. What individual skills and talents do they possess?	
2. How much do they rely on others to bring out these skills?	
3. How much do they contribute to the overall success of a team?	

- 1.2 When you have finished, discuss your thoughts with another group. Is there anything that you could add to your grid?
- 1.3 How have the individuals you discussed benefited from association with a team?

Task 2 What are the problems of teamwork?

- 2.1 Despite the advantages of teamwork, problems can sometimes occur. In groups, find examples of teams that might have difficulty working together. List reasons why problems might have arisen.



Too many cooks spoil the broth.

Team	Reason
E.g., a political party	Too many people involved who have very different ideas about how a country should be run.
Team 1	
Team 2	
Team 3	

- 2.2 Discuss your examples with another group and amend your notes if you wish.
- 2.3 Back in your groups, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of working together. When might you choose to work alone? When is it better to work in a team?

Task 3 Evaluate a team activity

- 3.1 Your tutor will provide each group with an object. Think of an alternative use for it and complete the table below. The other teams will vote on the most creative idea.



Name of object	
Use	
Marketability	
Price/value	
Durability	

- 3.2 Discuss the questions below with your team.

- What role did you have in the discussion?
- Who came up with the various ideas?
- Did you agree with the final outcome, or would you have preferred a different result?

Reflect

Think about how you can work as a team and still be an individual, and how you might avoid having bad experiences working as part of a team. What advice would you give to someone who was having problems working in a team?

Student notes for Unit 2

3 Effective team membership

At the end of this unit you will:

- be able to identify verbal and non-verbal clues during a conversation;
- have received practice in note-taking.

Task 1 Using verbal and non-verbal information

When we speak to other people we give verbal and non-verbal clues to indicate our thoughts and feelings. This can vary from culture to culture, so it is important to identify commonalities and differences.

1.1 In the left-hand column of the table below is a list of conversational strategies. In the right-hand column is a list of clues. Match the examples in the right-hand column to the actions.

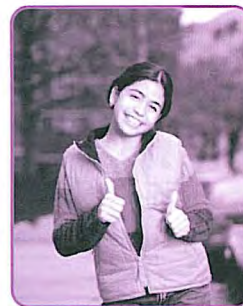
Strategies	Clue
1. Encouraging	a) I think we should develop Yang's idea about ...
2. Building on others' ideas	b) I don't believe that's such a good idea.
3. Including all members	c) Why don't we ...?
4. Showing agreement	d) Do you think that's possible?
5. Showing disagreement	e) That's a good idea.
6. Asking questions	f) We can conclude that ...
7. Making suggestions	g) I agree.
8. Offering information	h) It says here that the most popular form of entertainment is ...
9. Summing up	i) Does everyone agree?
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	

1.2 As a team, discuss the following two questions.

- a) Are the above strategies used in your culture? If so, how are they signalled?
- b) What differences did you discover between the various cultures in your group?

1.3 In spaces 10 to 14 of the grid opposite, add more ideas and examples that you think are important to mention.

1.4 Look at the strategies in 1.1 and decide which ones could be communicated in a non-verbal way and how. Then think of five strategies that are usually conveyed non-verbally and how that is done.



Task 2 Group observation

2.1 Work as a team. Choose one member as an observer and one member as a secretary to write down the conclusions of the team discussion. You have 15 minutes for the discussion.

Discussion group: Books shut, discuss the question: Which is the greatest city in the world? Think about architecture, people, food, history, etc. Don't just choose your own city. Be objective. Give reasons for your choice.

Secretary: Listen to the discussion and complete Grid A.

Observer: Listen to the discussion and complete Grid B.

Grid A

The greatest city in the world
Architecture
People
Food
History
Weather
Other

Grid B

Skill	Group member	Example
1. Encouraging verbally		
2. Encouraging non-verbally		
3. Building on others' ideas		
4. Including all members		
5. Showing agreement		
6. Showing disagreement		
7. Asking questions		
8. Making suggestions		
9. Offering information		
10. Summing up		

2.2 Debrief: Look at the observer's notes and discuss how the group interacted. Talk about the following points.

- a) Was the discussion restricted or did you talk about different things?
- b) How did group members make it clear that they agreed?
- c) How did they make it clear that they disagreed?
- d) Was anyone very persuasive?
- e) Did anyone try to dominate the discussion?
- f) Were certain people addressed more than others?

Reflect

You were asked to be objective in Task 2. This should have meant that you distanced yourself from the topic rather than being subjective, or personally involved.

Bearing this in mind, do you think it is easier to be objective or subjective about something that interests you? How do you think this affected your contribution to the discussion? Do you feel you were judged fairly by the observer?

Student notes for Unit 3

4 Interactive dialogue

At the end of this unit you will have:

- discussed cultural differences and how to deal with them;
- considered the importance of maintaining balanced interaction in conversation.

Task 1 Cultural differences

1.1 Cultural stereotypes can influence a person's judgement, perception and behaviour. With a partner, discuss the following questions.

- What differences do you notice when you speak to other students from a different culture? Are they quieter? Louder?
- Is it important to be aware of these differences? Why or why not?

1.2 With a partner, decide whether the following statements are true or false about different cultures. Write T or F next to the sentences.

- ☐ In Chinese society, controversial or potentially embarrassing topics of conversation are often avoided so that no one 'loses face'.
- ☐ Germans usually make decisions in business discussions more quickly than other Europeans.
- ☐ North Americans stand close to each other when talking.
- ☐ Asian societies tend to use formal terms of address and show great respect towards older people.
- ☐ Japanese students are sometimes reluctant to ask questions in seminars and classes.
- ☐ In Indonesia it can be impolite to say 'no' in a conversation.
- ☐ Latin Americans and Spanish people generally like to arrive on time, start promptly and go to bed early.

1.3 Discuss the following questions in groups.

- Are stereotypes true for everyone?
- How should we deal with stereotypes?
- What advice would you give to a student who talked too much or was too quiet?
- What do you think are the natural characteristics of students of your country?



1.4

Discuss with a partner ways you can minimise misunderstandings. Then write some tips for multicultural discussions below.

Task 2 Talking at or talking to

2.1

Type A: to you, i.e., eliciting a response;

Type B: at you, i.e., not interacting with you.

- a) Well, when I was at university, blah, blah, blah.
- b) I'd love to know what you think of your new hall.
- c) You should so listen to the new Eminem CD. Only a nerd wouldn't like it.
- d) How's your family?
- e) We've spent enough time on this 'at you-to you' exercise. Let's do the next one.



2.2

- Are you more of a Type A or Type B person?
- Are there any problems with being a Type A person?
- Might it be useful sometimes to be a Type B person? If so, when?

Task 3 Team behaviour

3.1 Working individually, match the strategies i) to vii) with the appropriate behaviour A) to D).

- A)** Includes shy, quiet people in your group's discussion.
B) Interrupts the conversation.
C) Keeps the floor to himself/herself.
D) Returns the conversation to something you were talking about earlier.
- i)** Avoids eye contact.
ii) Says something like 'Can I just come in here?'
iii) Turns towards another person.
iv) Says something like 'If I can just finish what I was saying, ...'
v) Makes eye contact with the person speaking.
vi) Says something like 'What do you think about global warming?'
vii) Says something like 'Back to what I was saying about ...'

3.2 Compare your answers with the group. Use the following questions to prompt discussion.

- When might it be appropriate to interrupt a conversation?
- Should shy people have to contribute to a team?
- How can you tell whether someone is shy or simply disinterested?
- What's wrong with wanting to talk all the time?

Reflect

Think about the following two situations.

- Past conversations where you might have talked at a person. Were you aware of doing this? Did the person you were talking to signal that they were not happy with you?
- Past conversations where there might have been cultural interference. Did either of you get angry or embarrassed? Did you realise at the time what was happening?

Reflect on whether you feel it is important to encourage equal participation in a conversation. If so, how would you encourage shy members of the group to participate?

5 Encouraging interaction

At the end of this unit you will:

- be able to identify and use techniques for encouraging and discouraging interaction between people.

Task 1 Listening techniques

- 1.1 Work in groups. Appoint a note-taker, then discuss which of the following strategies would encourage or discourage someone who was talking. The note-taker marks the general group consensus.

Strategy	Encourage	Discourage	It depends
Fidgeting			
Maintaining eye contact			
Scowling			
Smiling			
Head nodding			
Looking down			
Making non-verbal noises such as uh-uh or mm			
Using exclamations such as Really! Great! Wow!			
Repeating key speaker words			
Asking questions			
Keeping silent			
Folding your arms across your chest and sitting back in your chair			

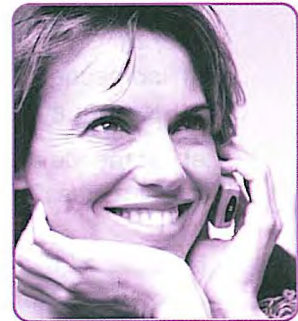
- 1.2 The note-taker will have observed your behaviour during the discussion. Elicit from him or her whether any of these techniques were used during the discussion.

Task 2 Deploying techniques

- 2.1 **Encouraging techniques:** In your group, discuss the food you most enjoy and why. Try to use as many of the encouraging techniques you highlighted in Task 1 as you can.

- 2.2 Evaluate the discussion with a partner. Use the questions below to prompt your thoughts.

- Did the techniques help?
- Were some strategies better than others?
- Did some strategies actually put you off?



- 2.3 **Discouraging techniques:** Take it in turns to describe the food you find most revolting and why you hate it. Stick to a strict time limit of two minutes. (Appoint a timekeeper or use a stopwatch.) The other members of the team should try to deploy the discouraging techniques.

- 2.4 Evaluate the discussion with a partner. Use the questions below to prompt your thoughts.

- How did it feel to be discouraged?
- Which strategy was the most frustrating?
- Did you manage to speak for two minutes or were the others too distracting?



- 2.5 **Think of situations where you may have inadvertently used these strategies, e.g., a classroom discussion, a conversation with parents, etc.**

- Why were you using these strategies?
- How do you think your interlocutor felt?
- Did you achieve your aims?

Task 3 Interaction issues

3.1 With a partner, discuss the following situations.

What would you do if:

- a) someone you were talking to did not maintain eye contact with you?
- b) someone kept interrupting you?
- c) you felt too shy to join in the conversation?
- d) someone kept using negative body language when talking to you, such as fidgeting, yawning or looking at their watch?
- e) someone asked you a question which you could not answer, in a public place, e.g., in a seminar or a class?

3.2 Discuss all aspects of this unit as a class. Try to monitor your own behaviour and that of other students during the discussion.

Reflect

Think about the way you talk in your own culture. Do you use all of the strategies discussed in this unit?

Reflect on aspects of body language that are used to show interest or disinterest. Which of these techniques do you think you use consciously or subconsciously?

Student notes for Unit 5

Unit 6 Ways of working with others

At the end of this unit you will:

- be more aware of the benefits of collaborating with a team;
- have discussed different teamwork activities.

Task 1 Examples of teamwork

- 1.1 List all the different ways that you have worked as a team over the past week. These don't have to just involve study techniques.

E.g., Deciding on a weekend plan with friends

- 1.2 Did you have much influence on any of the final decisions made? With a partner, discuss what happened. Express how you felt and whether the outcome could have been improved by using different strategies.

Task 2 Studying in a team

- 2.1 Collaboration with others is an important study resource. Complete the table below to show how comfortable you are with a variety of collaborative study activities. Work on your own, then discuss your answers with another student.

Activity	Happy	Not happy	Don't mind
Talking with others in your group about difficulties you are experiencing.			
Asking others in the group for their opinion on your ideas/work and giving your opinion.			
Giving reading suggestions.			
Discussing books or articles you have read with others.			
Acting as a guinea pig for a fellow student's research.			
Going through lecture notes together.			
Photocopying and reading each other's graded essays.			
Leaving if you feel you are too involved in another group member's problems.			
Copying someone else's assignment.			
Allowing someone to copy your assignment.			

2.2 Compare your answers with a partner. In what ways were they the same or different?

2.3 Discuss the following statements in groups. Do you agree with them? Why? Why not?

- 1) Two heads are better than one.
- 2) TEAM = Together Everyone Achieves More.
- 3) There is no 'I' in teamwork.
- 4) It is amazing how much you can accomplish when it doesn't matter who gets the credit.
- 5) A successful team beats with one heart.
- 6) Real teams don't emerge unless individuals in them take risks involving conflict, trust, interdependence and hard work.

2.4 Discuss the issues raised in relation to collaborative study as a class. Try to resolve any disagreements and build a consensus.

appropriate and
ing?
you feel there might

Web work

Website 1

When teamwork breaks down

http://www.readinggroupguides.com/guides/enduring_love-excerpt.asp#excerpt

Review

An extract from Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love* about a disturbing ballooning accident. This is the first chapter of a novel which explores the consequences of not pulling together as a team.

Task

Read through the chapter and think about what your response would be in this situation. Would you let go? Why? What do you think would happen if you didn't let go?

Website 2

Team-building

http://www.agcasscotland.org.uk/esoftskills/tw_introduction_02.html

Review

There is no 'I' in TEAM – Scotland's Graduate Careers website. This site interactively takes you through the process of team-building. It highlights the importance of working in a team in the workplace.

Task

Work through the interactive online tasks.

Extension activities

Activity 1

Reflect on the various exercises that you have done in this module.

List three skills that contribute to good teamwork.

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

List three things that contribute to poor teamwork.

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

Activity 2

Reflect on the various teamwork activities you have tried out.

- What did you find most difficult or challenging?

- What did you find came naturally?

Make a quick note of the skills that other members of your team noticed in you.

- Which skills do you need to improve on?

Glossary

Analyse (v) To break an issue down into parts in order to study, identify and discuss their meaning and/or relevance.

Body language (n) A form of *non-verbal communication* of feelings and ideas through movements of the body. For example, certain body movements such as fidgeting and yawning may indicate boredom.

Characteristic (n) Unique feature or trait that characterises a person, thing, place or group and identifies it.

Collaborate (v) To work together with another person (or other people) on a project or assignment.

Competition (n) A situation where individuals try to do better than each other, rather than cooperating and working together.

Conflict (n) (v) 1 (n) Strong opposition or disagreement within a group or between two or more groups.
2 (v) To clash or have opposing ideas or points of view.

Consensus (n) An agreement or majority decision reached by a group.

Contribute (v) To actively take part in something or give something to a situation, such as time, energy, thought or money. For example, it is important to contribute ideas when working in a team.

Culture (n) The beliefs, institutions, traditions, arts and patterns of behaviour of a particular group of people that help them structure their lives.

Cultural interference (n) The influence of one *culture* on another.

Custom (n) Something that is done as a habit or because of a long common tradition. Groups of people from the same region, *culture* or religious group generally share customs. For example, it is a custom to take off one's shoes when entering a Japanese house.

Debrief (v) (n) 1 (v) To talk to or question a group after an activity to find out and reflect on what

has been learned, and give participants an opportunity to express their feelings. 2 (n) A meeting or session in which debriefing occurs.

Discourage (v) To try to prevent someone from doing something through words or actions such as *gesture* and facial expression.

Dominate (v) To have a controlling position in a group or strong influence on a situation.

Encourage (v) To support someone and give him/her confidence to do something through words or actions such as *gestures* and facial expression.

Evaluate (v) To assess information in terms of quality, relevance, objectivity and accuracy.

Eye contact (n) A form of *non-verbal communication* in which people look into, or avoid looking into, each other's eyes when they communicate.

Fairness (n) The ability to make judgments in an honest, unbiased way, in line with accepted standards or rules.

Gesture (n) (v) 1 (n) An action meant to communicate an idea *non-verbally* or to emphasise a thought or feeling. 2 (v) To make such an action. For example, to put one's hand over one's heart to indicate sincerity.

Goal (n) An aim or end purpose that someone tries to achieve or reach.

Implication (n) Something that can be interpreted or inferred but is not directly stated.

Interaction (n) How people or things act together with each other, respond to and affect each other.

Interrupt (v) To enter a conversation or situation without waiting for someone to finish speaking or doing something.

Learning style (n) A style of thinking about, processing and remembering information that you have to learn. Different styles can be classified in a variety of ways. For example, you may have an analytical learning style.

Motivation (n) The intention and desire to move towards a *goal*. This enthusiasm is affected by different factors and environments. For example, studying with a friend or listening to an interesting lecture may increase your motivation to study.

Multicultural (adj) Describes a community or group that is made up of individuals of different national, racial or religious backgrounds.

Non-verbal communication (n) The communication of ideas (intentionally or unintentionally) through behaviour, body movement, gestures and facial expression, but not through words.

Objective (adj) (n) 1 (adj) Not influenced by personal feelings or emotions. 2 (n) The aim, or what you want to achieve from an activity.

Outcome (n) A final decision and result.

Participate (v) To get involved or take part in something. For example, it is important to participate actively in *seminars*.

Presentation (n) A short lecture, talk or demonstration given in front of an audience. The speaker prepares his or her presentation in advance and will often use visual aids or realia to illustrate it.

Role (n) The part someone plays in a group (or any situation that involves interacting with other people). In some situations, these roles may be flexible or unspoken, in others they are well-defined, such as the leader of a team.

Stereotype (n) A simplified and fixed image of a group of people or things. This may be inaccurate, due to over-generalisation or incomplete or biased information. For example, the view that Germans are always on time, and Mexicans are always late, is stereotypical.

Strategy (n) A plan of action that you follow when you want to achieve a particular *goal*. For example, it is possible to have a clear strategy for passing an exam.

Subjective (adj) Describes an idea or opinion that is based on someone's personal opinion rather than on observable phenomena.

Team-working skills (n) The skills needed to *participate* effectively as a member of a group, a team or a network. They include the following abilities: to work constructively with others, to be assertive without *dominating* too much, to be flexible and to *contribute* ideas.

Technique (n) A method or way of doing something that involves skill and/or efficiency. For example, it is possible to learn useful techniques for answering exam questions.

Time management (n) The ability to organise your time so that you use it more effectively and efficiently.

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