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15.277 Special Seminar in Communications: Leadership and Personal Effectiveness Coaching  
Fall 2008

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## Lab I. Activity Overview: Team and Individual Goal-Setting Exercise

Team members take time to build a team “guide--goals/norms--” based on individual strengths generated at the Warren Center. Through facilitated conversation, each participant gains insights from his/her peers about their own as well as their team’s strengths.

Typical Activity Outcomes	Potential “Core Connections”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals define their “Team Strengths”</li> <li>• Individuals define key “strengths” they see in their teammates</li> <li>• Teams set goals/norms for how they want to work together during the core</li> <li>• Build on each person’s individuality and contributions to align team beliefs and goals</li> <li>• Synthesize individual strengths to form a “map” for the team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the lab as a safe environment for learning</li> <li>• Connect the lab to 15.280 and 15.311 (project work)</li> <li>• Prepare team members to support each other throughout the core toward meeting individual goals</li> <li>• Prepare team to work together for the fall semester by assessing the team’s strengths and creating guiding goals/norms.</li> </ul>

### Activity Materials

- Facilitator Guide
- Brown envelop from Warren Center activity
- Watch

### Activity Time Frame

Total Time: 55 minutes

### Activity Schedule:

- 15 min: Introduction of Lab and Coach
- 5 min: Instructions for activity
- 3 min: Individual review of “memo to self” based on strengths
- 15 min: Share individual goals
- 10 min: Create team goals and norms
- 2 min: Capture it for the team’s use: everyone keeps a copy
- 2 min: Close

## Setting up the Activity

You will be new to this space. Make sure that everyone has an equal place at the table so that everyone can see each other.

## Safety Considerations

There are no physical safety concerns for this activity. However, creating and preserving a safe emotional climate for the discussion is paramount. It is very important that you carefully facilitate the sharing of individual goals. Make sure that the focus of the conversation is on acceptance of individual differences and that it does not turn into a discussion of weaknesses. Each team member should walk away from the activity with a positive sense of having their contributions included in the team's plan. This may require some encouragement of individual team members to include everyone's input in the discussion and decision. Be particularly sensitive to international students and their tendency to rush to finish.

## Facilitation Instructions

### Begin by introducing yourself and the lab

Say the following (in your own words):

*Our purpose in 15.277 lab is to extend the work of 15.280 by emphasizing (as stated in the title Communication, Leadership and personal effectiveness) skill-building and to support your team's efforts during the core semester. We are adjunct with the course and share a grade at the end of the term. 15.280 and 15.277 comprise a 9-unit course in Management Communications--the 9-unit course is divided into the 6-unit 15.280 and 3-unit 15.277 for administrative reasons. The same grade is recorded for both at the end of the term. Grades are based on preparation/performance, attendance and participation, and specific assignments. You will receive one grade based on input from both classes.*

I will record your attendance and your level of participation as a grade of "check, check-minus, check-plus or absence" which will contribute toward your grade in 15.280 final grades. Your preparation for the lab will be minimal. What is expected is that you will all want to be here, on time and prepared to contribute fully in every exercise. This is an experiential course. To get the most from it means participating fully, being present even if you are simply observing your team mates. To do less will short-change yourselves and everyone around the table.

My request is that you come on time and come prepared to focus. We have only 55 minutes to do work that will be important much beyond the activity itself, skills that will contribute to your work as a leader, manager, team member and communicator.

The Syllabus is in your course packet (15.280). (You might want to put what follows on a flip chart.) But to give you a preview of coming attractions: next week prepares you to give and receive feedback. The next 2 weeks focuses on speaking--first practicing the impromptu, and second, telling a leadership story. Week five touches on leadership and culture, six on managing conflict, seven is on feedback within the team, eight is on informational interviewing and nine is on speaking—your vision of leadership. The last two weeks (session ten) is rehearsing the OP presentation and (eleven) is reviewing the video-tape with feedback on the presentation.

These skills comprise the building blocks of speaking, interviewing and working with others.

*My role as “coach”—is meant to facilitate each individual team member and the team’s skill development and performance improvement. By facilitate, my role will be to provide resources – exercises and activities—for you to participate in. Through such activities, you will be asked to practice skills. I am not to teach or to tell, but to facilitate your experience. That’s a key distinction. You will make decisions about individual member’s learning and the team’s learning together. I will observe and provide resources and guide you through the process and give feedback. My own experience in 15.277 lab last year and my experience with the coach was (and here you will find a positive note)....Being selected to be your coach means....to me.*

### Step 1: Introducing the Activity

Say the following (in your own words):

*As we said at the Warren Center and it bears repeating: Nobody can get through the core on their own. Successful core teams find ways to leverage each other’s strengths and to assist and support each other. Two weeks ago at the Warren Center, after rafting and climbing the tower and various other activities you were able to take some time at the end of the day to reflect on the day and your own participation in the team experience. Many of these experiences gave you a choice as a team: do we want to gain all points and have only the best climbers on the tower? Or do we want all to have that experience? Did we keep calculating as long as time and process permits, or did we stop when we had achieved our goals. Teams are a blend of individual and group needs, desires and*

*activities. Your team at Sloan can play a central role in your learning—from a personal as well as an academic point of view—or a less central role. Today you will look at what you learned about yourself at the Warren Center, your strengths and what surprised you. Then relate your personal goals to your team’s needs. From that you can set goals and norms to guide the team. This activity will help you review your individual strengths, set individual goals, and team goals, and relate these to the way we want our team to work together this term.*

## Step 2: Overview the Activity Schedule

Overview the goals and schedule with the team (in your own words):

- 1. The purpose of this activity is to create goals and our team norms. Knowing our team’s goals/norms will remind us of our strengths to leverage them when they are needed to be more successful in our teamwork.*
- 2. The activity is designed to help teams synthesize individual aims and objectives with their team’s aims and objectives.*
- 3. You may also wish to ask the team to support individual goals.*
- 4. The activity is divided into three parts. For Part I, you will have time to review your memo and draft individual goals.*
- 5. In Part II, we each spend 2 minutes sharing our individual strengths (as we choose to do). We will share our goals and ask for team support.*
- 6. And, finally, in Part III, we will reflect on this activity and try to identify the team guide--goals/norms-- that reflects our team beliefs and strengths.*

## Step 3: Lead the Self-Reflection Activity

Hand back their individual strengths from the envelope to each individual.

Tell the team: First, read and review their “memo to self” lists of “strengths”. Second, write down your goals for yourself using or reacting to “strengths”. Third, write down your draft team guide--goals/norms.

Offer examples of “guide--goals/norms--” “Our goal as a team is to help every member of the team to improve their business skills in their areas of weakness.” “Our goal as a team is to produce quality work while supporting each other’s communication skills.” “Our goal as a team is to help every member receive an “A” in every class.”

Norms: We will not interrupt each other. We will appoint timekeeper, scribe, and facilitator for every meeting. We will practice “Close listening”. “We will include everyone.” We will concentrate on the task.” “We will be present for every meeting”. “We will allow time to socialize.” “Communicate every day.” “Build on everyone’s ideas.” “Accept risk.” “Take turns leading.”

## Step 4: Lead the Strengths Sharing Discussion

Introduce the discussion by saying the following (in your own words):

*As we have already been discussing, successful teams are able to identify and leverage each other's strengths. We are going to participate in a discussion that will help each of us understand the strengths individuals bring that become our potential contributions. We will also practice being candid and open with each other about what our goals reveal about ourselves. The team will act as a support for each individual to grow and develop through this class.*

Ask team members to select an order to know who will go first, second etc.

Explain the structure of the activity:

1. Each person will have a turn.
2. When it is your turn, discuss what you see as your strengths and your goals for yourself and the team. If you wish ask the team for supporting your personal goals.
3. Each team member will spend approximately 2 minutes and then we will move on to the next team member

#### **Facilitation Notes:**

1. It is critical that you track the time during this activity. You will only have approximately 2 minutes per participant (assuming 7 team members). Therefore, without being pushy, be sure to set expectations with your team about timing, provide warnings of when a "round" is nearing its end, and encourage participants to be clear and concise in what they share.
2. On the other side, do not be so rigid with your time observance that you inhibit the conversation and move through the activity too fast. Each team member should be allotted the full 2 minutes for conversation.
3. Team members should be encouraged to ask for clarification to understand how the team member feels about it.

**Step 5: Ask the team to discuss and brainstorm team guide--goals/norms.**

Ask one or more of the following questions to help them move into this:

1. Understanding what we as individuals want to achieve this semester, what can we say about the team goals?
2. What did you hear your team members say that aligns with your own goals for the team?
3. What did you hear that surprised you?
4. How can an activity like this help our team to be successful during the Core?
5. Which goal do you think helps reveal the most about our individual and team strengths? Why?)
6. **(Be sure to ask this question)** How can we capitalize on our teams' strengths in working together this semester?

## Step 6: Summarize the Activity and Explain What Happens “Next”

Explain the following:

*The challenge today is to take away the specific significance of having each member of this team fully involved in your working together and a team goals/norm as a constant reminder. Each of you will write down the guide to remind you.*

## Step 7: Explain Your Anticipated Role during the Core Semester

*This is a good time to remind them of your role as facilitator and coach.*

*In each week of the semester, as you can see from the outline, I will be facilitating both individual and team performance improvement towards communication, leadership and personal development.*