

Week 4 Mini-Session  
Case Study: A Team in Trouble

## INTRODUCTION

*Need help?* Contact Cindy Page at [cpage@nlc.bc.ca](mailto:cpage@nlc.bc.ca) or David Batterham at [dbatterham@nlc.bc.ca](mailto:dbatterham@nlc.bc.ca)

### Moving from/through a Cognitivist to Constructivist to Connectivist approach

As the Week 4 Overview identifies, “collaborative learning, especially in teams, has the potential to greatly enrich the learning experience”. Such was the case for us: the Week 4 Mini-Session Facilitators. We spent some time developing the Week 4 activities. Over that period we also discussed our own experiences in the ISWO and agreed that we both wanted and needed more time to reflect on the learning and the processes. Initially we wrote down the outcomes and the assessment criteria and constructed some learning activities around that. Later we felt that there was too much for the participants to do and not enough space to reflect, so we combined some activities. We still weren’t satisfied that there was enough room, so we opened up the activities to allow the participants to choose threads of learning that were important to them individually, and planned a facilitation strategy that would prompt the participants through a forum to address, at least in part, important features we felt were missing. Finally, we refocused the final outcome on the important take-away(s) for each individual. We are hoping that if each individual is able to share an important take-away with the group, then that in itself is community-building.

As everyone moves through the week’s activities, we are interested in how this approach will work for the participants. Questions to keep in mind to frame your final reflection on Saturday:

- Did it change your approach to your learning?
- Did it give you space to reflect?
- Did the looseness of the structure make you feel uncomfortable?
- Other comments

## INSTRUCTIONS

The Task Chart below should be your guide so return to it often, paying close attention to the “Due by When” column. For further clarification, we have provided more information here:

### Step 1: Resources

Begin your week by reviewing/reading/watching the resources and videos. Find these in the Week 4 Resources (Facilitating Online Teams)

### Step 2: Team in Trouble Survey

As your first learning activity for Week 4, please read the email chain of the *Group in Trouble* and then complete the **Team in Trouble Survey** by noon (PST) Tuesday March 4th. Keep your answers brief, but provide enough detail so that we can find trends and commonalities when they are compiled. We want to distribute the compiled answers back to the group by 3:00 pm (PST) Tues March 5<sup>th</sup>. After that we will be asking you to respond to some separate questions in a few forums that explore roles and responsibilities.

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**Note:** we see there is also a “Self Check Poll” embedded into the Week 4 Activities. That is an overall course responsibility and not to be confused with the “**Team in Trouble**” Survey due by noon on Tuesday March 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Step 3: Participate in Week 4 Activities as per the Task Chart (below)**

**Team Charter (for discussion in the assigned forum)**

A lot can be done to prevent conflict in team activities if, at the formation of the team, an agreement is reached between the members as to the roles, tasks, goals, basic ground rules and conflict management protocols. Such agreements are often called Ground Rules, or Charters. Briefly review the documents below. Have you used an agreement like one of these to guide a team before? If so, was it useful? If not, can you see where it would have been useful for some of the teams you have worked with? Depending on the level of engagement and the longevity of a team, an extensive charter could be drawn up. If an agreement was used for the Team in Trouble, could it have prevented the conflict? What kind of features would it have had? We have added the following resources to consider:

Links:

[http://www.itdl.org/Journal/Jun\\_04/article03.htm](http://www.itdl.org/Journal/Jun_04/article03.htm)

<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/toolkit/workgroup/forming/rules/>

<http://classes.uleth.ca/200301/mgt3210y/Admin%20stuff/Team%20Charter%20Template.doc>

C and D’s Agreement (see in a separate link in the Week 4 Mini Session Section)

**Stories Discussion Forum**

Most of us can recall a story that is similar to the **Week 4 Team in Trouble** email chain where a team (e.g. students doing group work, conflict in committees, workplace team projects, etc.) process has not gone smoothly. Share stories in the discussion forum created that illustrate challenging online conflicts similar to the case study. What was the resolution, if any? What learning occurred as a result?

**Conflict Resolution/Prevention Wiki**

Three startup questions within the one wiki, like a template.

**Instructions:** Dear Participants. Now that you have reviewed the email chain, the next step is to describe some strategies. Each participant should respond to a different question in the wiki (first come, first choice). Then collaborate to add some strategies to the other sections.

- Preventative Steps to Avoid Serious Conflict
- Supporting all members of a group in crisis
- Role of the Instructor

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**Step 4: Final Reflections:**

**Reflecting Learning in Communities: Support Strategies**

After the group has considered all of the resources and learning activities for the week, individually reflect on the stories, the strategies and your own experiences. Individually you will then outline the important learning that has taken place for you and share with the group at the end of the Week 4 activities.

**TASK CHART**

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Learning outcomes	Assessment Strategies	Tasks	Facilitator	How	By When (PST)
1. Work effectively with groups online (including recognizing group dynamics, and identifying opportunities to prevent or manage group conflict) Use appropriate strategies to establish and maintain instructor presence	Identify strategies for working with diverse online communities (e.g., existing cohort and team cultures)	Team in Trouble Survey based on Case Study	David	Complete the Readings and the Team in Trouble Survey	Tues noon
		Review/Discuss David & Cindy's Sample Team Charter or Guidelines	David	New Resources/ Forum Discussion	Wed-Fri
	Propose solutions to conflict resolution in online teams	Share stories that illustrate challenging online conflicts similar to the case study. What was the resolution, if any? Could you suggest a possibility now?	Cindy	Forum Discussion	Wed-Fri
Use appropriate strategies and tools to establish and maintain instructor presence, and support learning and community goals	Suggest support options for resolving or preventing team conflict going forward and comment on the role of the instructor in managing team conflict	As a team, collaborate on a Wiki using pre-assigned headings	Cindy	Team Wiki – produce a “take away” resource	Wed-Fri
Recognize and assess community-building elements and strategies in the design of online learning activities and courses  <i>Identify important learning from the week's activities and describe how the group gelled during the week.</i>	Suggest ways that team work and processes can be supported to accommodate team conflict when it arises	Classmates or pairs identify support strategies to help a team in conflict		Forum Discussion (Learning from Wiki collaboration):  <i>What's in it For Me?</i>	Fri/Sat

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