

# Professional Communication Workshop

CITS5206

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA**

# Agenda for Today's Workshop

- 1. Culture: Teams and Diversity**
2. Meet your team: Ice breaker
3. Communication: Listen, Speak, Reflect
4. Teamwork Code of Conduct
5. Professional Communications: Emails
6. Homework: things to do before next class

# Teamwork and Communication

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Good teamwork is the most important skill you will need for success in this unit.

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Everyone needs to learn how to work well in a team.

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**Good communication** is the key skill for working with other people

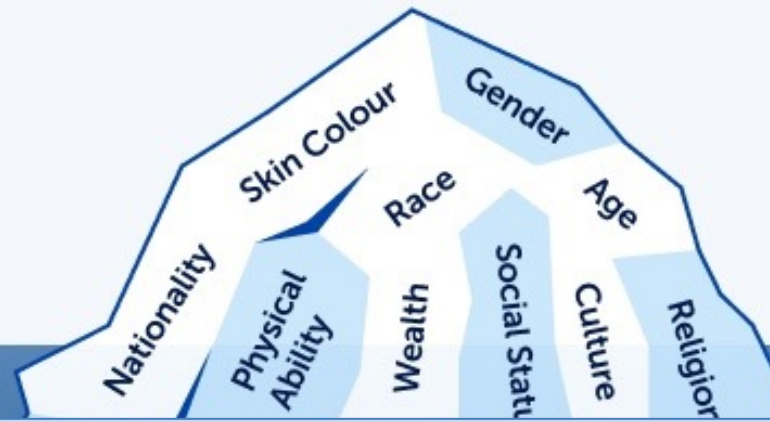
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Make sure you take the time to learn this.

# What is culture?



# Waterline of Visibility



Source: Brook Graham – The Diversity Iceberg (2011)

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# Example: Culture and Timekeeping



<https://clockify.me/blog/managing-time/time-perception/>

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# Task: Team Intros Two Truths and a Lie

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Find your assigned team members and sit together

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Each member states **two facts** about themselves (these are your truths) and **one lie**.

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Everyone else tries to decide **which is the lie** out of the three given statements.

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# Critical team skills

- Every team will encounter challenges during the project
- Reflecting on what happened and how you can improve things in future is an important part of this unit
- Three critical skills for teams:
  - **Listen**
  - **Speak**
  - **Reflect**
- With each deliverable you will submit a Professional Reflection
- For guides on writing a Reflection see Skills-Workshops and Resources tabs on [teaching.csse.uwa.edu.au/units/CITS5206/](http://teaching.csse.uwa.edu.au/units/CITS5206/)

# Critical team skills 1: Listen

*Other skills that I think my team can improve on, is **attentive listening** and the ability to understand client's need. A lot of time and energy were wasted to help others understand and what client really wants. I think it is very important to understand the whole conversation instead of catching bits and pieces of the full picture.*

CITS5206 student

# Critical team skills 1: Listen

*There was a **storming stage** in our group as well. When we were not familiar with each other, we had disagreement on selecting the best way to solve the problem, everyone thinks themselves got the best idea. We should have recorded down the advantages and drawbacks of each alternative way, and according to this, we could easily select the optimum solution.*

CITS5206 student

# Phases of team dynamics

Orientation (forming)

Dissatisfaction (storming)

Resolution (norming)

Production (performing)

Termination (adjourning)

# Critical team skills 2: Speak

- *Each team member felt the feeling of “my voice is not heard” due to my low confidence that each can deliver the right program as well as overall experience working in an IT project.*
- *Personally, I thought what I could done better is encourage other teammates to express their ideas, and help them clarify what they mean, and pay more attention to the members who are still a little bit shy.*
- CITS5206 students

# Critical team skills 2: Speak

- *To encourage every group member to discuss during meetings, we might **ask for quiet group members' ideas** and make sure everyone understand each other. If everyone has a chance to make strong contributions to the group project and to the discussion at meetings, then the group work will be more effective and productive.*
- CITS5206 student



# Critical team skills 3: Reflect

- *Leading a team with various skill level is a challenging task and for which I had zero preparation ... I often found myself over engineering the solution. ... I spent hours trying to solve the problem “my-way” instead of researching and reading documentations which would have saved many hours of pointless typing. ... After an open discussion with other members, I realised we all felt the same! Fortunately, it wasn't too late, and we were able to come with a working strategy to avoid over engineering and sticking to our MVP*

# Critical team skills 3: Reflect

- *I think **patience** is another key to do well in this project as well. As this project involve solve problems that we never encounter before, it is very common for us to get stuck and get no progress for hours. **It is very important to not give up in such situation.***

# The 4Rs Model of Reflective Thinking



Level	Stage	Questions to get you started
1	<b>Reporting and Responding</b>	Report what happened or what the issue or incident involved. Why is it relevant? Respond to the incident or issue by making observations, expressing your opinion, or asking questions.
2	<b>Relating</b>	Relate or make a connection between the incident or issue and your own skills, professional experience, or discipline knowledge. Have I seen this before? Were the conditions the same or different? Do I have the skills and knowledge to deal with this? Explain.
3	<b>Reasoning</b>	Highlight in detail significant factors underlying the incident or issue. Explain and show why they are important to an understanding of the incident or issue. Refer to relevant theory and literature to support your reasoning. Consider different perspectives. How would a knowledgeable person perceive/handle this? What are the ethics involved?
4	<b>Reconstructing</b>	Reframe or reconstruct future practice or professional understanding. How would I deal with this next time? What might work and why? Are there different options? What might happen if...? Are my ideas supported by theory? Can I make changes to benefit others?

## References

- Bain, J., Ballantyne, R., Packer, J., and Mills, C. (1999). Using journal writing to enhance student teachers' reflectivity during field experience placements. *Teachers and Teaching*, 5(1), 51-73.
- Carrington, S. and Selva, G. (2010). Critical social theory and transformative learning: evidence in pre-service teachers' service-learning reflection logs. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 29(1), 45-57.

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# Team Code of Conduct

- CoC is a statement of shared understanding:  
*These are the terms of group conduct and cooperation that we agree on as a team ...*
- Agreed expectations about ways of working  
*Signed by ... all team members*
- Explicitly state expected behaviours
- CoC can be used for reviewing and correcting team dynamics and contributions

# Task: CoC Brainstorm

- Each member of the group to state one **behaviour** they think is important/expected from all group members for this project
  - e.g. all group members shall attend scheduled meetings or send an apology in advance
- Brainstorming = **no discussion** - just collect ideas each person thinks are important, write them down!
- Afterwards: round the class – each group gives an example of one CoC behaviour

# Considerations for the CoC

- Goals/Philosophy
  - your core principles and norms, ensure all can contribute
- How you will communicate
  - preferred modes, and project management tools
- Meetings:
  - when and where held, setting the agenda, meeting roles
- Planning:
  - setting tasks, deadlines and milestones
- Decision-making and conflict resolution:
  - how will you make decisions, especially when there is disagreement
- Time-Keeping
  - expectations, monitoring
- Review
  - how and when will you reflect on the CoC, and how will you review it?

# More CoC considerations

- Don't make it too complicated
  - Focus on no more than 5 areas of conduct
- Read and adapt **existing** templates
- Make it positive
  - **Don't** use punishments
- Be realistic
  - 10 hours per week per student to deliver the project (6 hours/wk) and professional skills development in-class activities (4 hours/wk)



# Assessment using the CoC

- Each team is to create
  1. A **code of conduct** (CoC) for the team
  2. A **rubric** of standards for meeting that CoC
- **The team** will regularly rate the performance of each team member on this CoC and discuss any adjustments needed
- **The team will submit an agreed ratings of each team member as part of each major deliverable (weeks 5,8,12) for an individual Professionalism mark of 5% x 3**

# Examples for CoC Contracts

- UWA Study Smarter (working in groups guide, team agreement template)
- <https://www.uwa.edu.au/students/Support-services/Academic-support#resources>
- UNSW guide
- <https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/groupwork>

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# Professional Communications: Email

1. Start with the right greeting
2. Understand your intention
3. Explain your intention
4. Get to the point
5. Sign-off Correctly
6. Use an appropriate signature
7. Proofread

Source: <https://www.betterup.com/blog/how-to-write-a-professional-email>

# How NOT to write an email

- hey,  
i need help on my group project can i  
come by your office tomorrow
- thx

# A more professional email

Dear Dr. Jones,

I am in your ENGL 101 class on Thursdays, and I have a question about the paper that is due next Tuesday. I'm not sure that I understand what is meant by the following sentence in the prompt:

“Write a 10 page paper arguing for or against requiring ENGL 101 for all UNC freshmen and provide adequate support for your point of view.”

I am not sure what would count as “adequate” support. Would using 3 sources be OK?

Can I come by your office tomorrow at 2:00 pm to talk to you about my question? Please let me know if that fits your schedule. If not, I could also come by on Friday after 1:00.

Thank you,

Tim Smith (student ID)

# Task: Intro to your Project Client

- Draft an introduction email to your project client.
- Introduce yourselves
- Set up a first meeting
- Review your email carefully
- Once approved, send to the client

# Honest and Direct: How to Say No Politely to a Client (With Examples)

*Learn how to say no politely—so you can say yes to the clients and projects that matter.*



Read these guides

<https://www.freshbooks.com/blog/honest-polite-and-direct-how-to-say-no-to-a-client>

<https://www.helpscout.com/helpu/how-to-say-no/>



# Saying No (this is harder!)

- Sometimes you have to say no to requests
- It is important to do this respectfully but clearly
- State the issue clearly – in writing is good
- Explain your response and reasons
- Review your email carefully
- Keep this one for later (hopefully you won't need it)

# UWA Study Smarter

## SS7-Writing-Emails

### Some Dos and Don'ts

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Don't</b> use text-speak, informal abbreviations or emojis;</li><li>• <b>Don't</b> be too informal or familiar in your tone and avoid using offensive language;</li><li>• <b>Don't</b> use coloured text or elaborate fonts;</li><li>• <b>Don't</b> send unsolicited attachments; and</li><li>• <b>Don't</b> forget to say thank you!</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Do</b> be polite, concise and to-the-point;</li><li>• <b>Do</b> put your request at the start of the email;</li><li>• <b>Do</b> use proper grammar, spelling, capitalisation and sentence structure;</li><li>• <b>Do</b> be patient when waiting for a response; and</li><li>• <b>Do</b> use your UWA student email account.</li></ul> |
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<https://www.uwa.edu.au/students/Support-services/Academic-support#resources>

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# Things to do before next week

1. Read <https://teaching.csse.uwa.edu.au/units/CITS5206> carefully. Make sure all the assessment deadlines are in your diary
2. Exchange contact details with your team and arrange a regular weekly meeting time
3. Hold initial discussions about your project: why you chose it, what you are hoping to learn from it
4. Draft a team Code of Conduct contract (to be refined over the coming weeks)
5. Nominate a client liaison person in your team
6. Contact your Project Client (see email task)
7. Meet with your Project Client as soon as possible (you will need to speak with them before next week's UX workshop)



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