DEVELOPING TEAM WORK

A TEAM BUILDING EXERCISE FOR STUDENT LEARNING AND PROJECT GROUPS

Purpose: To help newly formed student groups establish a firm foundation for productive and satisfying work together.

Method: Students work collaboratively to clarify and develop a shared understanding of how they might best work together. The process involves individuals sharing their self perceptions of team related behaviours and preferences as well as goal setting, relationship building and climate setting activities. The process can be independently undertaken by student groups without staff supervision.

Time Required: Approximately 1-2 hours. The time required will be reduced if individuals complete and score the questionnaire and familiarise themselves with the process before meeting.

Format: This exercise is primarily intended as a team development activity for newly formed student learning groups. While the process is optimally effective in its full form it can be shortened (with some acceptable reduction in impact) by omitting the self-reflective questionnaire component. Individuals may also benefit from undertaking the process by themselves if they wish to better understand ways in which they might enhance the effectiveness of a newly formed team.

Developing Team Work

What is the value of doing this exercise?

Physical structures require solid foundations. This enables them to be functional (eg provide safety and shelter) for their occupants. It is the same with teamwork. Teams are safer, more satisfying and productive structures if their members take the time to lay down the foundations of working together. This exercise is intended to help you achieve that goal.

What will I achieve?

This exercise is designed to help newly formed teams establish an effective "working contract." As a result of undertaking this process you can expect to:
- Better understand your own team behaviours and attitudes and the implications of these for working effectively with others.
- Appreciate the similarities and differences in team members' expectations and contributions and how to work constructively with these.
- Develop an understanding of your team task and the types of procedures and processes you might need to productively achieve this.
- Develop effective working relationships with each other.

What is involved?

In the first section we invite you to discuss this exercise as a group and to make an informed group decision about whether you wish to undertake it. Think of this as your group contracting stage.

In the second section we invite you to individually assess yourself on arrange of behaviours that might influence the type of team you might prefer to be a part of and the type of role you might wish to have.

In the third section we invite you to work collaboratively through the team building process. There are four main steps: develop working relationships, negotiate outcomes, clarify your group environment and establish a working climate.
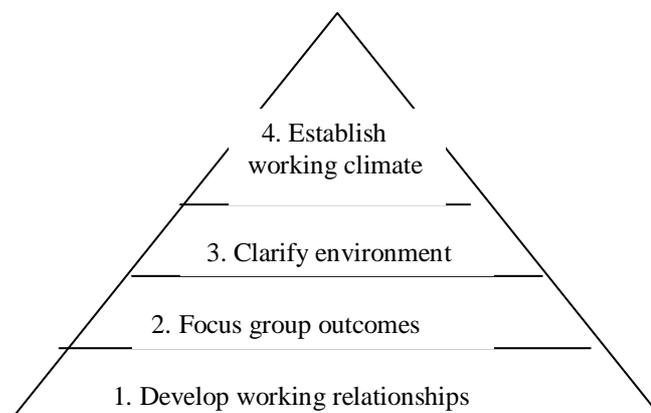

Figure 1: The steps in the team building process

Section 1: Assessing Your Team Preferences

The Team Preferences Questionnaire

Instructions: The purpose of this first step is to provide an opportunity for you to *assess yourself* in a range of areas related to the type of team environment you may prefer. We will present you with a number of statements and ask you to circle a number from 1 to 7 that best represents your expectation or preference.

This exercise will be of most value if you *frankly and honestly* describe your current expectations or preferences. Each of us has an individual set of experiences and perceptions. One profile is not necessarily preferable or better than another. Resist the temptation to "look good" in the way you respond. The aim of this exercise is to help you *honestly appraise* your current situation. Presenting yourself in a way that you might think is more desirable will defeat the purpose of the exercise.

Read each of the following statements and then use the matching scales on the scoring sheet (page 5 of this booklet) to rate how characteristic each of these is of you. Please use the full range of the scale (from *not at all characteristic of me* to *very characteristic of me*) to describe your responses to each statement.

1. Expected Course Interest/Task Goals
In this section you are invited to assess *how interesting you expect this particular course* will be.

A. I can see the relevance of studying the content of this course.
B. I don't expect to find this course particularly interesting.
C. The subject matter of this particular course is likely to be of value to me.
D. To be honest, I don't see why we should have to study the material in this course.

2.Expected Interest in Developing Group Skills/Process Goals
In this section you are invited to describe you *current level of interest in developing group skills* from participating in this learning group.

A. I would be disappointed if I wasn't a more effective team member or leader after participating in this group.
B. I would prefer in this particular group that we minimise time spent reflecting on our team processes.
C. I am interested to use my participation in this group as an opportunity to develop my team skills.
D. My focus is primarily on "just doing the task" set for the group.

3. Achievement Orientation
In this section you are invited to describe your *general attitude to doing well* at university.

A. It is important to me to achieve as high a grade as possible.
B. I am happy to do enough work to pass but I'm not prepared to push myself at university.
C. I am very motivated to do well at university.
D. I have a very relaxed attitude to study.

4. Procedural Order
In this section you are invited to describe your preferences for *styles of working*.

A. Sticking to deadlines and organising my time are important priorities for me.
B. I prefer meeting plans and arrangements to be flexible and able to be changed.
C. It is important to me that meetings are planned well in advance.
D. I prefer to "go with the flow" with most things.

5. Self-Assertion
In this section you are invited to describe an aspect of your interpersonal style

A. I'm not afraid to speak my mind or tell people if something could be done better.
B. I tend not to speak up for myself or disagree with people
C. I usually let people know when they do something that affects me.
D. I tend to go along with what others decide even if I'm not happy about it.

6. Responsiveness
In this section you are invited to describe another aspect of your interpersonal style.

A. I can sometimes get impatient listening to people.
B. I'm good at tuning in to people and can usually judge how they are feeling.
C. I can "turn off" and " tune out" in group meetings and discussions.
D. I actively work to ensure that everyone "feels heard" in a group discussion.

7. Overall Attitude
In this section you are invited to describe your *overall feelings about participating in the learning group* in this course.

A. I expect that the learning group experience in this course will be satisfying for me.
B. I'm not sure that working in the learning group in this course will be productive for me.
C. I expect that the group in this course will be an effective learning experience for me.
D. I am concerned about working in a learning/study group in this course.

Team Preferences Questionnaire

Scoring Sheet

Please use these scales (from *not at all characteristic of you* to *very characteristic of you*) to indicate your rating of yourself on each statement. Do not be concerned if the numeric value of ratings is reversed from item to item. This simply reflects the wording of a statement. Rate all the statements before adding the totals for each section.

1. Expected Course Interest/Task Goals								**2. Expected Interest in Group Skills/Process Goals**						
	Not at all		**Moderately**			**Very**			**Not at all**		**Moderately**			**Very**
A.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	A.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	B.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
C.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	C.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	D.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Task Goals total score:_____

Process Goals total score:_____

3. Achievement Orientation								**4. Procedural Order**						
	Not at all		**Moderately**			**Very**			**Not at all**		**Moderately**			**Very**
A.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	A.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	B.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
C.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	C.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	D.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Achievement Orientation total score:_____

|Procedural Order total score:_____

5. Self Assertion								**6. Responsiveness to Others**						
	Not at all		**Moderately**			**Very**			**Not at all**		**Moderately**			**Very**
A.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	A.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
B.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	B.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	C.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
D.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
S														

Self-Assertion total score:_____

Responsiveness to Others total score:_____

7. Overall Attitude to Present Group							
A.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
C.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Overall Attitude total score   :_____

General Background Information

What is your year of study? 1 2 3 4 5

What is your age?   _____

What is your gender? Male   Female

1. Establishing Working Relationships for Your Group

An effective working group requires effective working relationships between its members. All groups base their effectiveness on clear and accurate communication between members. The quality and quantity of information people exchange, and the extent to which they are able to work together to understand and apply that information, depends to a large degree on the quality of their relationships. A key part of "getting off to a good start" is establishing relationships between group members that are sufficient strong to support them in collaboratively working on the group task. The more demanding the group task the stronger members' working relationships need to be.

It is important to understand that whether or not teams are effective *does not* depend on how well members know each other at the beginning (ie the teams initial relationship composition). However, team effectiveness does depend on whether or not team members actually discuss and understand how to enhance their level of connection with each other.

Identifying team members starting level of connection

Write the names of the other members of your group in the spaces that best represent how well you currently know them.

Don't know/ never met	Know by name or appearance	Know casually	Know well/ worked with	Know very well/ friend

Figure 2: Level of connection of group members

You can use this information to plot a group relationship map. For this step you will need to pool and compare each members lists of "starting connection". Use the space below to plot how well group members currently know each other. Represent people as dots and use the distance between the dots to represent how well people currently know each other. Thus, if two people know each other reasonably well then place their names close together in the space. This only needs to be a rough map to stimulate discussion, not a perfect representation of the connections between people.

Figure 3: Group Relationship Map

Use your groups rough relationship map as a starting point for a discussion around the focal questions:

What are the current patterns of connection in our group? Who is currently more or less connected?

What, if any, are the working or relationship histories between group members?

How might our current level/ patters of "connection" influence our capacity to be an effective group ?

Given our relationship composition (see Box 1), what might be useful relationship development strategies for our group?

Box 1: Possible Group Relationship Development Activities

If the *relationship composition* of your group is best characterised as "***none of us really knows each other or has worked together previously,***" then some possible *relationship challenges* you may face include:

- people being unsure about each other (eg work habits)
- social shyness or discomfort interacting with strangers
- early frustration with the additional time and effort it may take to get the group moving
- resisting using first impressions or stereotypes to understand each other.

One *relationship strategy* you might consider is spending a little time either in meetings or outside of group time getting to know each other better. Given that you don't know each other that well it may also be useful during meetings/discussions to more regularly check what each other is thinking or feeling on issues.

If the *relationship composition* of your group is best characterised as ***"everyone knows each other fairly well"***, then some possible *relationship challenges* you may face include:

- friendships and fun interfering with work
- assumptions or "baggage" about each other from previous times carried over to this group
- members colluding to "keep it safe" so as not to disturb existing relationships.
- reduced interest in undertaking team/relationship building activities

One *relationship strategy* you might consider is discussing how this group may be different from previous situations where you have known each other. In particular, you may find it productive to discuss how the present group task may require different working relationships (eg type, depth etc) from those you may have had previously with each.

If the *relationship composition* of your group is best characterised as ***"some people know each other quite well and others don't"***, then some possible *relationship challenges* you may face include:
- members who know each other may form sub-groups because it is "easier to manage"
- less connected members can feel "left out" or that " its not their group"
- more connected members having more say/influence in the group
- people may feel competing loyalties

One *relationship strategy* you might consider is deliberately seeking " build bridges" across any potential sub-groups, or by deliberately giving more air space to individuals or minorities who are less well connected.

2. Focusing Your Group Outcomes

Groups exist for a purpose. Your learning or project group has been formed to achieve specific goals. If the members of your group are able to be clear and agreed about their outcomes the better placed to collaborate effectively towards achieving them.

One of the first steps towards "collaborating on goals" is determining the level of compatibility between the goals of individual group members. The more that group members are able to be "in synch" about what they think this group can or should be seeking to accomplish the greater the chance for synergy of effort. Once again there isn't a right level of goal compatibility, but rather the emphasis is on appreciating each members current priorities.

The goals of learning group fall into two general categories: *task goals* (viz. learning the content curriculum set for the group, achieving the group task, delivering project outcomes) and *process goals* (viz. learning about the process of groups, developing group/team skills, learning to be an effective team member). People generally vary in the relative priority they place on these types of goals.

Plot your self-ratings for your level of interest in task and process goals in the goal space below (see Figure 4). Your scores for task and process goal priority can be plotted as a single point in the space. Group members may also want to share their self-ratings with each other. These can also be plotted in the space to provide a profile of your group's level of goal compatibility.
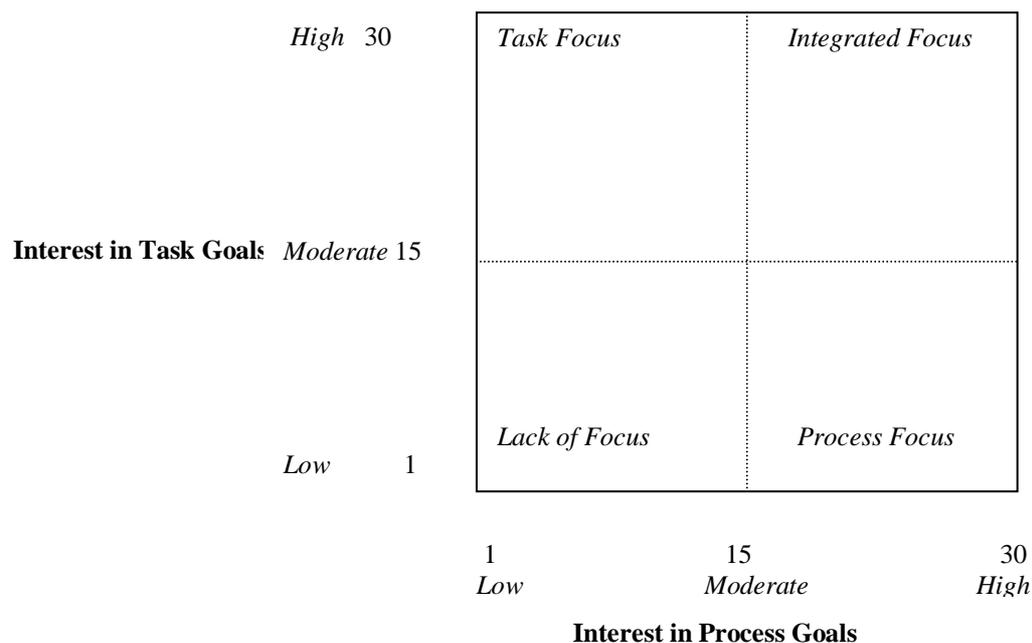
Figure 4: Team Goal Space

You may find it useful to use your team's goal space plot to start a discussion. The emphasis is better understanding and appreciating the relative importance each other places on types of goals. Some focal questions are:

What are the similarities and differences between us in the priority we give to task and process goals?

As a group do we tend to emphasise one goal type more than the other?

What might be the implications of the above for how we might work together?

The aim of this next step is to help you focus your purpose and direction as a group. Based on the information currently available to you (viz. course/subject outlines, briefing notes, input/communication from teaching staff) develop through discussion a general statement describing the *overall purpose of this group* as you currently understand it. You can then if you wish make this purpose concrete by developing *some short specific goal statements* (eg To work together to design and present a seminar on….; To support and develop each others learning in the area of…; To develop skills in the area of….; To learn to…. etc) that together operationalise or represent your groups purpose. As draft goals emerge from your discussion record them in your groups goal matrix (See Figure 5).

As a final step you may wish to check that group members:

Have a shared understanding of goals (Clarity).

Believe that they are feasible/doable (Feasibility)

The overall purpose of this group is:

Our purpose will be achieved through these specific goals and outcomes	*Clarity*	*Feasibility*	

3. Managing Your Groups Environment

Groups function in a context or environment. The environment for your current learning group is the host course or program in which it is situated. The success of a group depends not only on factors internal to itself (eg the cooperation between the members) but also on external factors (eg available resources and information). Some of the factors that may influence your group are outlined below in Figure 1. Even though these factors are described as "external" to your group they are by no means out of your control. There is much you can do to ensure that your group environment is as supportive as possible. This is the task we invite you to consider in the next activity.

Figure 5: The factors in your learning group's environment : An agenda for clarifying expectations and negotiating needs.

Staff members roles and their level of availability.

The level of "fit" with the rest of the course/program

Your access to resources

Your Learning Group

The way your group will be rewarded

The type of procedures to be used for problem solving

The type of accountability required of your group
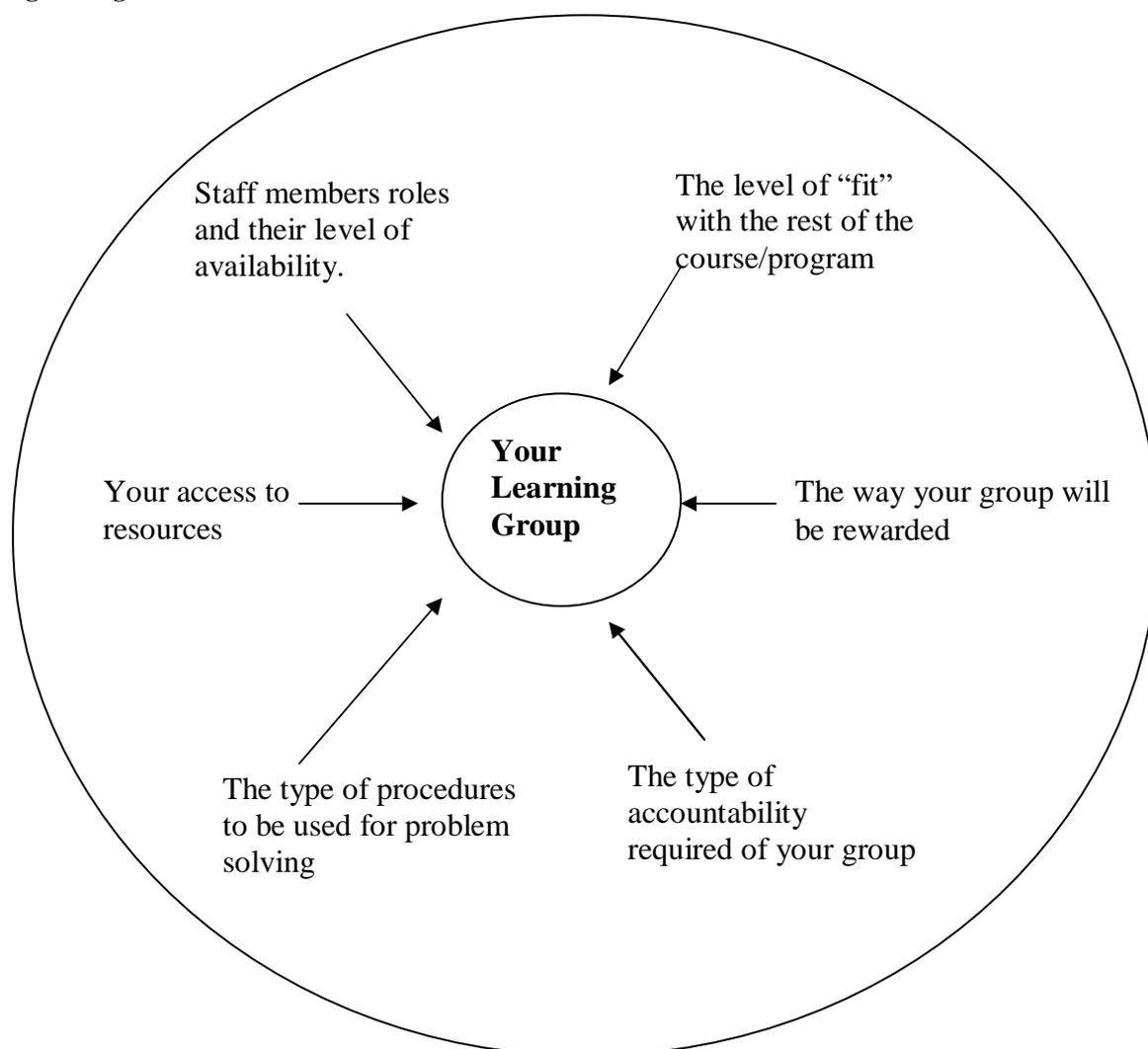
The aim of this activity is to help you better manage the environment of your group. Based on the information currently available to you (viz. course/subject outlines, briefing notes, communication/input from staff members) clarify your understanding of environmental issues. Use the focal questions in Box 4 to guide a discussion around how your team intends to actively manage the environment in which it will work. If there are issues or concerns raised from this discussion then make a note of these in the space provided for later discussion with the appropriate staff member.

Box 2: Managing your group's environment

Staff Roles
What expectations do staff have regarding the responsibilities of staff and students in managing these learning groups?
What roles do staff intend to play in relation to our group (eg facilitator, consultant, resource person, auditor/examiner)?
What specific services or support can we expect from staff?
How do we contact or access staff?

Problem Solving
What is the procedure for involving staff if we encounter difficulties or experience problems that we can't manage ourselves?
What are the types of issues about which staff are likely to want to be kept informed sooner rather than later (eg drop out/non attendance, conflict etc)?

Resources
What resources (eg information, materials etc) are available to support the group?

Accountability
What are the requirements for group or individual member accountability or record keeping (eg log book of meetings, statements of member contributions/attendance etc)?
What are the required minimum standards for the group or individual members (eg minimum number of meetings)?

Rewards
How will the groups activities and outcomes be assessed?
How will individual members and the group as a whole be rewarded?
How fair and equitable do we consider the assessment package to be?
Are there any potential tensions or conflicts?

Contextual Fit
Are we clear how this group "fits" with the rest of the course (eg clear rationale provided for working in groups, the group task is meaningful to us)?

Staff Engagement
Do we feel appropriately supported by staff?
Do staff appear to be interested and engaged?
Do staff appear to practice what they preach about working collaboratively?

Information or issues we would like to clarify or negotiate with staff

4. Establishing a Working Climate for your Group

In the preceding sections you made progress towards establishing working relationships (*Who are we?),* agreeing on group goals (*What do we want to achieve?)* and clarifying the environment in which you will be working (*What is expected of us?).* Your next task in building an effective team is specifying the processes and procedures that you would like to have in place as you work towards your goals (*How will we get there?).* You can think of this as establishing a working climate for your group.

The climate that members set at the beginning of a group can influence not only how task productive the group eventually is but also how satisfied you feel as you work together on the task. A group climate that is consciously set by members to reflect their collective preferences for styles of working and to support the specific purpose of the group provides a strong foundation for effectively working together. Disagreements, problems coordinating efforts, and conflicts over ways of working often arise out of the undiscussed or assumed expectations of members. You can think of this as an investment in developing a shared understanding about how you would like to work together.

There are three main areas that may be useful to develop some initial shared understanding :
- How should we approach the task (our task climate/norms)?
- How should we relate to and treat each other (our relationship climate/norms)?
- How should we approach the task of improving the way we work together (our learning climate/norms)?

4.1 Developing a working task climate
This activity has two steps. In the first step we ask you to use your self- assessment scores to profile your group on task related factors. In the second step we ask you to consider the type of task climate that would best suit your group given the requirements of its goals and the preferences of its members.

Two types of personal factors can have an influence on the type of task climate you might prefer in this group: your *Achievement Orientation* and your need for P*rocedural Order.* People generally vary in the relative importance they place on these attributes. One implication of this is that members of your group will have different expectations about the best way to approach the group task. The aim of this exercise is to help you understand the types of expectations that each other has about approaching a task. The aim of this exercise is to help you understand the types of expectations that each other has about approaching a task. The aim of this exercise is to help you understand the types of expectations that each other has about approaching a task. and the implications that this might have for working together.

Plot your self-scores for *Procedural Order* and *Achievement Orientation* (refer to the Scoring Sheet on page) to Figure 2 below. You can express your scores as a single point in the matrix. Group members may also wish to share their self-ratings with each other. These can also be plotted in the matrix to provide a profile of members' task climate preferences. A description of the two factors is provided in Box 5.

High 30	Flexible Achievement	Orderly Achievement
Achievement Orientation		
Moderate 15		
Low 1	Flexible Underachievement	Orderly Underachievement

1	15	30
Low	*Moderate*	*High*
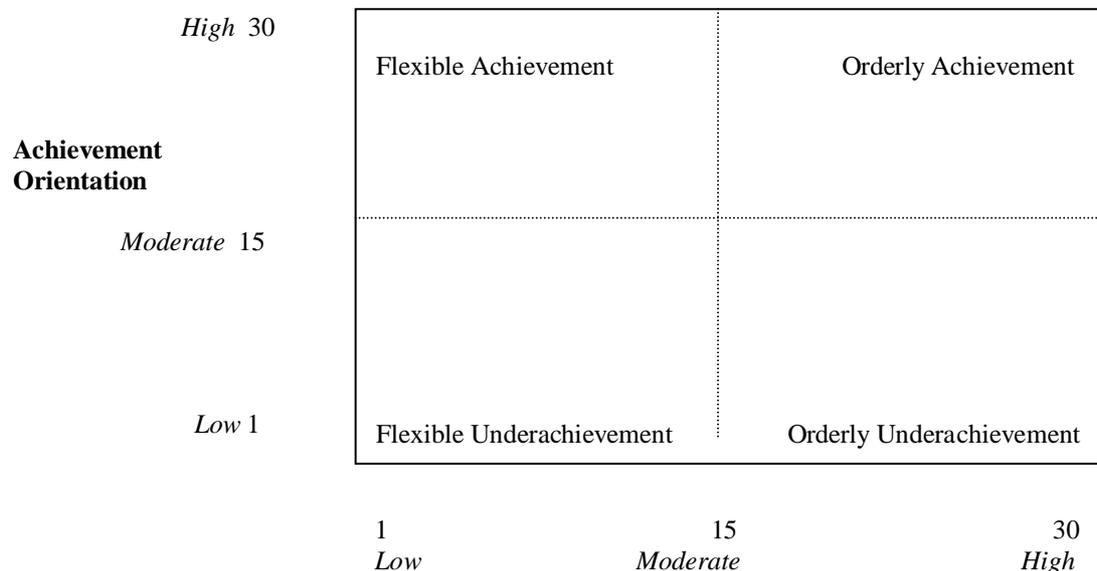
Preference for Procedural Order

Box 3: Two personal factors influencing the task climate of your group

Procedural Order

People differ in their preferences for order and structure in their wo4rking routines. People with a higher preference for order emphasise the importance of planning ahead, regular, clear and predictable group procedures, and time structuring (eg sticking to deadlines, time management). In contrast people with a lower preference for procedural order emphasise the importance of flexibility, changing with circumstances, negotiating/extending deadlines, and placing other priorities above organisation. Both are valid and neither is better than the other. However differences in group members' preferences for order if not consciously discussed and understood can become a source of tension, and even conflict. People with a higher preference for order can sometimes judge others as being "loose, fuzzy headed and unreliable". Whereas people with a lower preference for order can judge others as being "too rigid, narrow, anxious or controlling."
These judgements can interfere with effective cooperation on the task. Have you ever judged people in this way?

Achievement Orientation.

People also differ in the degree to which achievement or "doing well" is important to or valued by them. People with a strong achievement orientation will emphasise excelling at set tasks, setting and attaining challenging goals, self-improvement, being outstanding and attaining as high as level as possible in the situation. People with a lesser orientation towards achievement will emphasise the importance of other goals apart from "doing well" or excelling. They are often motivated by other priorities (eg relationships). Both are valid choices. However when a group of people are placed in a situation where a successful outcome depends on them working well together differences can become important. Differences can arise regarding what we are prepared to invest ourselves and what we expect of others as a " fair effort/contribution or acceptable standard of outcome. People with a strong achievement orientation can judge others as "being slack, not responsible, expect others to do their work, and not caring". People with less emphasis on achievement can judge others as "workaholics, demanding, having unrealistic standards, nothing is ever good enough, and wanting to take over and do it all themselves."

As before you may find it useful to discuss your teams task profile. Remember the emphasis needs to be on appreciating and understanding rather than judging and convincing each other. Some focal questions are:
What are the similarities and differences between us?
What might be the implications of this for how we might work together?

In this next step we invite you to apply your insights from the previous profiling exercise to clarifying the particular task norms and procedures that would best suit your group. These are outlined in Figure X.
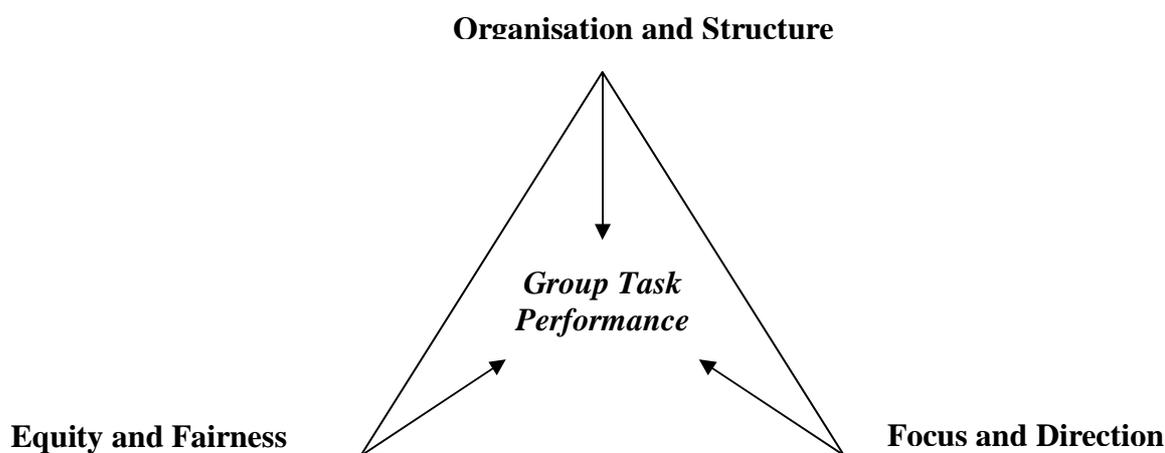

Figure 7: Aspects of Your Groups Task Climate: An agenda for Clarification

Box 4: Developing the task climate for your group: Questions for Discussion

Equity and Fairness
What do we think is fair to expect from each other in regard to workload or contribution?
What are the "signs" of making a fair contribution (eg attending meetings, doing allocated tasks, supporting others efforts, keeping meetings functional etc)?

What do we want to do if any one of us is feeling they are doing more than their fair share?
What have we learnt from previous experiences about how to manage/not manage issues of fairness?

What is our preferred approach to the task of "making this group work?" Are we all willing to take responsibility for the group or do we wish to leave this to a keen few who will become the "leaders"?

Organisation and Structure
Given our group task and time frames, what types of procedures and structures, if any, might be worth considering (eg meeting agendas, plans, task allocations)?

What is our preferred approach to the allocation of "group jobs" (eg scribe, facilitator, observer, etc)? Do we want to share/rotate these around or have members undertake specialist roles?

How do we prefer to make decisions?

Focus and Direction

What shared standards or level of outcomes are we aiming for (eg from 'doing nothing' to 'good enough' to 'excellent')?

What is an acceptable level of "off task" activity? What is the best balance of task and social activity for us?

Potential Challenges
Given our situation (eg time frames, task demands, differences of member profiles) are there any factors that are likely to hinder/get in the way of us getting the job done?
What can we do to minimise or prevent these?

The key task norms and procedures that we want in our team are:

4.2 Developing a relationship climate for your group

In the preceding section you focused on the first aspect of establishing a working climate for your group -the task of developing a shared understanding of how you will approach your group task. In this section we invite you to focus on the second aspect of establishing a group climate-the task of clarifying the type of working relationships you would like to have with each other as you work together to accomplish your group task. At the end of this section you should have a shared understanding of your "working relationships".

As before this activity has two steps. This activity has two steps. In the first step we ask you to use your self-assessment scores to profile your group on task related factors. In the second step we ask you to consider the type of task climate that would best suit your group given the requirements of its goals and the preferences of its members.

This activity has two steps. In the first step we ask you to use your self- assessment scores to profile your group on relationship related factors. In the second step we ask you to consider the type of relationship climate that would best suit your group given the requirements of its goals and the preferences of its members.

Two types of personal factors can have an influence on the type of relationship climate you might prefer in this group: your *Self-Assertion* and your *Responsiveness to Others*. People generally vary in the relative importance they place on these attributes. One implication of this is that members of your group will have different expectations about the qualities of an effective working relationship. If misunderstood differing expectations can lead to later conflict or resentment. The aim of this exercise is to help you understand the types of expectations that each of you hold about team relationships and implications that this might have for working together.

Plot your self-scores for *Self-Assertion* and your *Responsiveness to Others* (refer to the Scoring Sheet on page) to Figure 3 below. You can express your scores as a single point in the matrix. Group members may also wish to share their self-ratings with each other. These can also be plotted in the matrix to provide a profile of members' task climate preferences. A description of the two factors is provided in Box 6.

High 30	Challenging/Confronting	Integrated/Engaged
Self-Assertion		
Moderate 15		
Low 1	Disengaged/Disconnected	Supportive/Agreeing

1	15	30
Low	*Moderate*	*High*

Responsiveness to Others
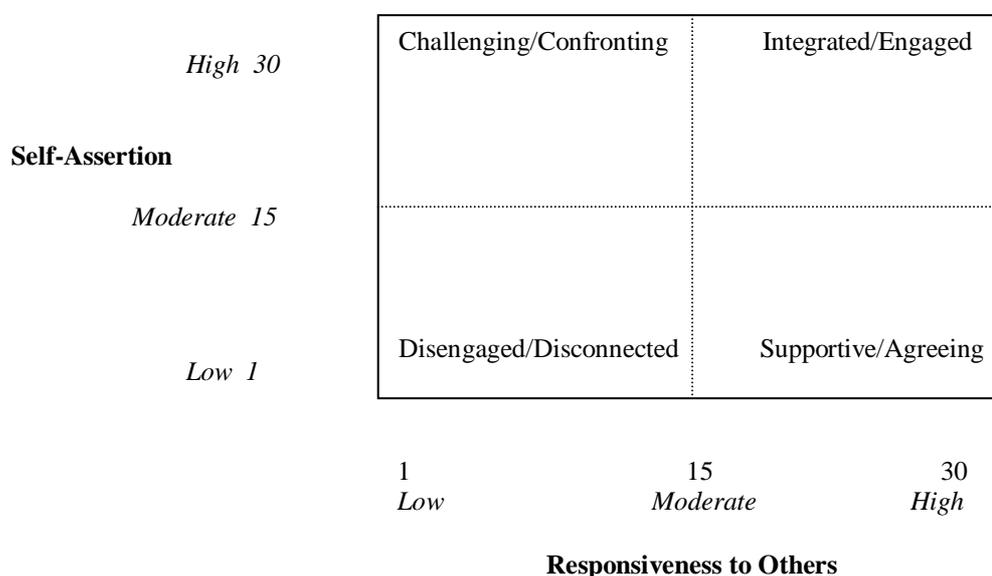
Figure 8: Your Team Relationship Profile

As before you may find it useful to discuss your team's *relationship profile*. Remember the emphasis needs to be on appreciating and understanding rather than judging and convincing each other. Some focal questions are:
What are the similarities and differences between us?
What might be the implications of this for how we might work together?

Box 5: Two interpersonal factors influencing the relationship climate of your group

Self- Assertion
People differ in their capacity to assert or express themselves or their point of view. People who are assertive put forward their needs, preferences, and opinions. They are able to "speak up" or "stand up" for themselves and "say what they want" in a situation. They tend to be direct and definite in their approach with others and more extroverted and active in their attitudes. People with a lesser orientation towards self-assertion may be more indirect in their approach to people and issues. They may be less willing to argue for their needs or state their opinions strongly. These people are likely to be more introverted and reflective in heir approach to the world. Differences in peoples approach to "asserting themselves" can lead to conflicts and resentments if not understood. The challenge is for team members is to monitor their perceptions. People who are highly assertive (or more so than others are used to) can be seen as confronting, controlling, dominating, or aggressive. Sometimes "holding firm" to their ideas and values can drift into "arguing for the sake of it". People who are less assertive can sometimes be seen as soft or fluffy or easily controlled. Sometimes their quietness can be mistaken for shyness or under confidence. Sometimes they may appear to agree with request or ideas but would really prefer to refuse or disagree. Don't assume that silence equals agreement.

Responsiveness to others
People also differ in how responsive they are to other people. People who are highly responsive to others are generally relationship oriented. They make a point of showing others that they respect and value their ideas and contributions. They see themselves as "good listeners" and notice others needs and feelings. They have a capacity for empathy or seeing issues from the other person's point of view. Being friendly and cooperative is important to these people. People who are less responsive to others tend not to notice how others are feeling. They tend to have a self-sufficient view of the world and don't tend to go out of their way to help others. They tend to value autonomy and individuality and not to place a high priority on maintaining relationships. People who are highly responsive can sometimes be seen as too polite. They sometimes can be so focused on "not hurting others feelings" or "avoiding conflict" that it is difficult to have frank conversation with them. Their "helpfulness" can sometimes go too far (or be experienced as too much). People who are less responsive can sometimes be seen as cold or not caring or treading on peoples feelings. Sometimes they make criticise an idea without being aware of the others persons feelings.

In this next step we invite you to apply your insights from the previous profiling exercise to clarifying the particular relationship norms and procedures that would best suit your group. These are outlined in Figure X.

Openness

Collaboration between members

Challenge   **Support**
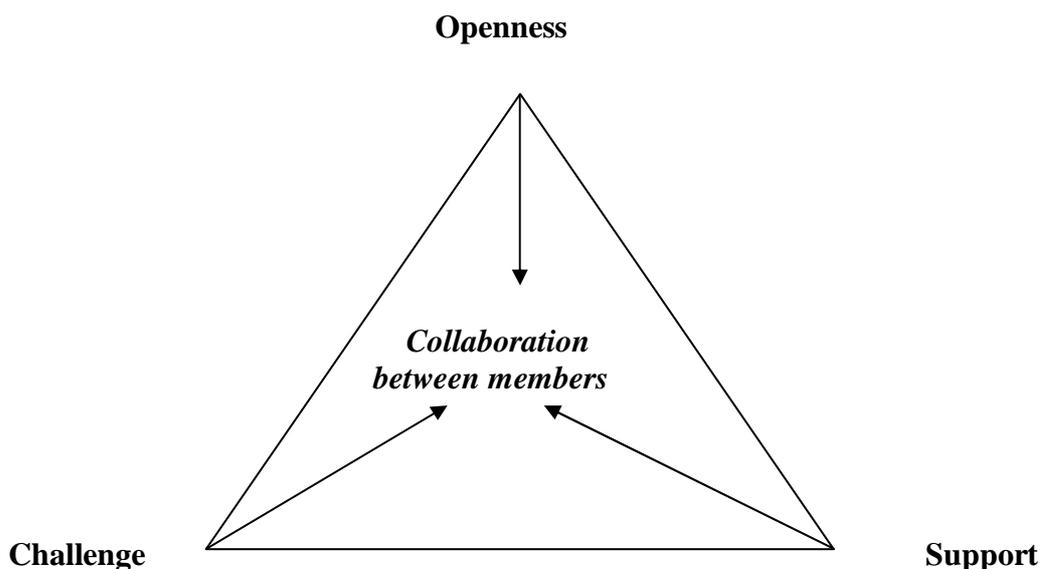
Figure 9: Aspects of Your Groups Relationship Climate: An Agenda for Clarification.

Box 6: Developing the relationship climate of your group

Support
What is our attitude about the potential value in this group of encouraging and supporting each other (eg. actively listening to each other, expressing agreement or appreciation, giving positive compliments etc)? What might be a useful level of encouragement in this group? What are the limits?

What do we feel about individuals asking each other for help? What is acceptable? What are the limits on asking for and giving help.

What is our attitude as to how the available "air time" should ideally be distributed between us in discussions? Whose responsibility is it to manage our involvement and participation in discussion?

Challenge
What is our attitude about the potential value in this group of challenging and stretching each other (eg critiquing ideas, reality-testing contributions, inviting disagreement)? What might be a useful level of challenge in this group? What are the limits?

What do we feel about "disagreements" between people? What is our attitude to the potential value in this group of exploring differences between us (eg our ideas, opinions, values, and preferences)? How do we make our disagreements constructive?

Openness
What is our attitude about the potential value in this group of members being open and frank with each other about a range of issues related to their life, work and study? What level of openness and self-disclosure between us would we value? What are the limits?

The key relationship norms and procedures that we need in our team are:

4.3 Developing a learning climate for your group

The final preparatory step in developing a working climate for your group is considering how you will review and improve your functioning as you work together on the group task. Teams face a variety of challenges as they proceed through the stages of working together. One of the key features that distinguish "average" from "excellent" teams is a commitment to learning from the experience of working together (i.e. not just "doing it" but "trying to do it better"). At the end of this section you should have a shared understanding of your team's learning climate.

Your team's capacity to learn and improve depends on how well you do three tasks: monitoring and reviewing your team's process, giving and seeking feedback from each other, and, most importantly, team members taking responsibility for managing the quality of their contributions to the team.

Self-management

Team learning and improvement

Monitoring and reviewing process

Giving and seeking feedback
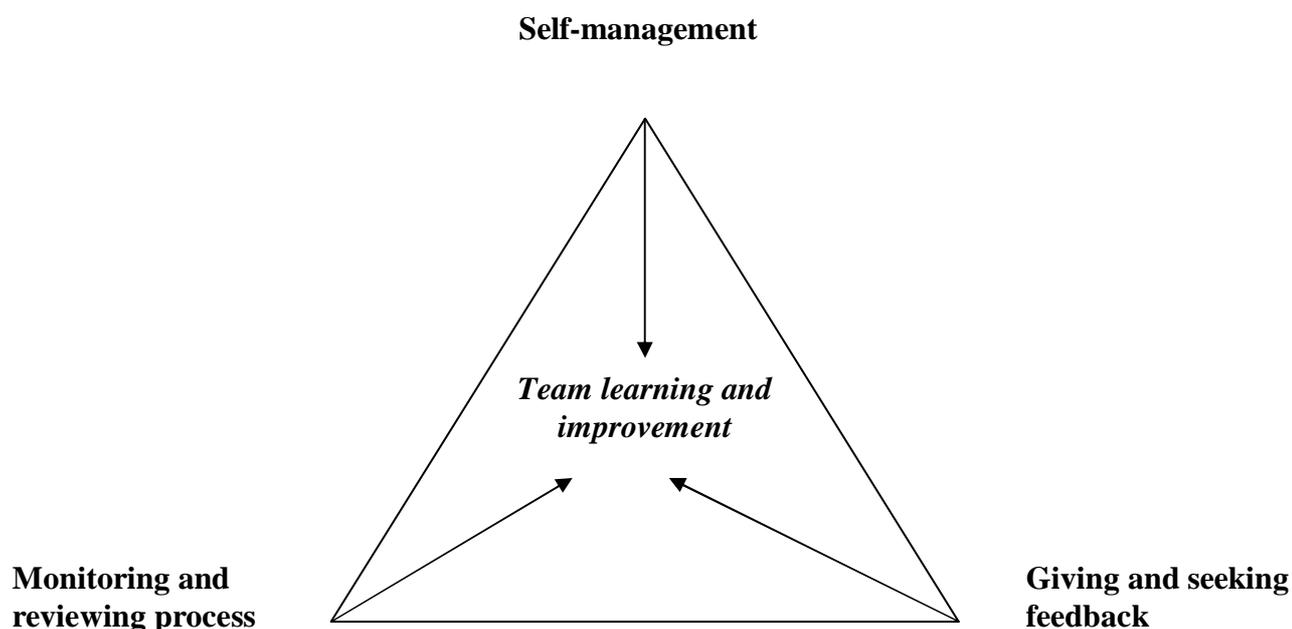
Figure 10: Aspects of your group's learning climate: An agenda for clarification

What follows is a process to help you clarify how you will approach these learning issues as a team. We will present you with a set of statements that describe possible activities in each of the learning areas of self-management, giving and seeking feedback, and monitoring and reviewing team process.

Take a moment to individually read through this list. Then, working individually, place a tick in the space in the space provided if you are particularly interested of motivated to engage in a learning task in this group. Only tick those learning tasks that really interest you.

Box 6: Developing the learning climate of your group: Tasks for consideration

A menu of team learning activities	Tick if interested
Activities for monitoring and reviewing team process	
1. Paying attention to other members responses and reactions and inviting their input/comment (eg I'm not sure this is working for…….What do you think, John?")	
2. Noticing when discussions or interactions between members become stuck or problematic and pausing the action to understand the causes (eg "Is this working for us? Can we approach this differently?")	
3. Participating in "end of meeting reviews" with a view to learning to do better next time (eg "What went well not so well in todays meeting? What can we improve next time?"	
Activities for learning from feedback	
1. Taking time to affirm the positive aspects of the teams performance or what each member is doing well or contributing to the team (eg I appreciate…. We seem to have strengths as..").	
2. Being willing to give other members feedback on their ideas, performance of behaviour if necessary.	
3. Being willing to seek or ask other members for feedback on your ideas, performance, or behaviour.	
Activities for self-management	
1. Taking responsibility for speaking up if you think there is an opportunity or issue that would be helpful for the group to consider (eg "I'm finding this discussion is not working for me….does anyone else feel this way?").	
2. Admitting when you don't know something or are feeling confused.	
3. Controlling your emotions and not sulking or getting defensive when you are disagreed with or given critical comment.	

Now share your *team learning profile* with each other. Note the areas where there is a lot of personal interest and where there is less or little interest. Some focal questions are:
What are our likely learning strengths and blind spots as a team?
What are the implications of this for our capacity to learn rather than "crash and burn" as a team"?

The key learning norms and procedures we want in our team are: