

# CISC106 Fall 2009 Projects

## What are team difficulties?

If people in your team are disagreeing repeatedly, arguing, not communicating, not attending meetings, submitting poor work, or not submitting work, then you have team difficulties.

Learning to work in a team is about learning to deal with people and their opinions, work habits, communication styles, etc. **It may be the most important lesson you take from this course.** Do not take it lightly.

## How to address team difficulties

1. **Teamwork:** *The whole team is responsible for progress*, and so every member of the team should view team interactions as a chance for progress to be made, or for progress to come to a halt. The team leader is the person most responsible, but if everyone is conscious of how they can share this responsibility the team will benefit greatly.
2. **Prevention:** One role of the team leader is to facilitate discussion and work flow so that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the team. When people feel valued, they are more willing to listen to others and to compromise a position. Therefore if one or two people are dominating the group, this can frustrate other members and is a problem for the team leader to address. (Note - team leaders should *especially* not dominate a team!)
3. **Facilitation:** If disagreements occur, prevent them from escalating into arguments by facilitating resolution within the group. Point out to the parties involved that team progress depends on resolving disputes quickly. Suggest a way forward, or ask parties to come up with a solution that all can live with.
4. **Resolution:** If the disagreement is about how braces will be indented in team programs, the leader might remind the team to get a life and then flip a coin. If the disagreement is about function output, the leader might lead a re-reading of the function specification; if that doesn't clearly resolve the issue, the leader can address the question to the TA or professor. In any case, the leader helps the team see the need to move forward out of the disagreement, and either offers a way or asks other team members if they can offer a way forward.
5. **Referral:** First, make every attempt to solve team difficulties within the team. After all of a team's internal resources have been exhausted, the leader can ask for an appointment with the Professor to discuss the problem. Note: this should be viewed as an extreme step. Once you ask for help in team business, the professor has the right to interfere with team business, specifying new roles, new assignments, or other methods in an attempt to restore functionality. Do not view this as an easy way out of a group.

## Failure to Participate

If you have a team member who is not attending meetings, not responding to emails, and not submitting work, you can ask to have that person removed from the team for failure to participate.

Prepare an email to the TA and the professor including the meetings the person has missed, what emails and other communication have been exchanged, and what work has been done and not done by the team member in question. The professor and TA will review the request.

If a team member is removed for non-participation, the Professor will decide if they can receive any credit for the group portion of the project (half to two-thirds of the grade) and they will be responsible for coding the project by themselves.