Created for the Great Problem Seminar Program at Worcester Polytechnic Institute
©Elisabeth (Lisa) Stoddard and Geoffrey Pfeifer

Team Project Roles

Wolfe (2010) discusses the need for and role of a team manager who keeps the project on schedule. The team manager reminds the team members about deadlines and responsibilities, keeps meeting minutes, prepares meeting agendas, and facilitates disagreements. We have found that, despite Wolfe (in her book) and faculty (in the classroom) telling students that a team manager is different from team leader, the manager often dominates decision making and task assignment. We have also found that this role too large for first-year students, and even upper-class students. We have also found that giving each team member a leadership role and rotating these roles, gives everyone an opportunity to lead, to have their voices heard and taken seriously, and take to ownership over and become invested in the work. This increases equity in team dynamics and student investment in the project. The areas we have added aim to improve team equity and have been highlighted in gray.

Team Manager
The team manager takes meeting notes and sends them to the group after the meeting. They update the task schedule based on the meeting and sends it to the group. They also send out deadline reminders, based on the meeting notes and task schedule.

Team Facilitator
 The team facilitator writes up the meeting agenda for the upcoming team meeting. To construct the agenda, they draw on the previous meeting notes, task schedule, and communication (email, in class discussion) since the last meeting. They send the agenda out before the meeting and ask the team if anyone has anything to add. They use the agenda and a facilitation guide to facilitate the meeting. They help manage conflict by ensuring that everyone's voice, potentially using the facilitation guide, and by drawing on the team contract to remind everyone about agreed upon rules of conduct.

Production Manager
The production manager helps organize and facilitate project products, such as a written draft or presentation. For example, on a written draft or presentation, they would help to organize the document or presentation by working with the team to outline the narrative of the piece. Once the big picture narrative is created, they might help facilitate the division of labor - who will take on which section. The goal is to help manage the production of the project, but not to be in charge of or dominate the vision of the production or the division of labor.

Research Facilitator
The research facilitator helps facilitate the research plan at various project stages. The facilitator should use the team's research objectives or questions as facilitation guide. As the team is assessing where they are with the project and what the next steps are, the research facilitator should use the team's research objectives or questions to facilitate the discussion and next steps. For example, "Which objective will research X help us achieve?". Keeping these big picture objectives or research questions in mind, they might help facilitate the division of labor - what research objectives/questions still need to be worked on, and who will work on researching what next to help meet those objectives or answer those questions.

Project Roles modified from Team Manager created by Wolfe, Joanna. 2010 *Team Writing: A Guide to Working in Groups.* New York: Bedford/St Martin's Press.