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## MG204A Reflective Journal

### Purpose

The purpose of the reflective journal is to encourage students to observe interactions, analyse what happened using Organisational Behaviour (OB) theory and think about ways to improve and develop team task performance and relationships (team maintenance).

The Reflective Journal (RJ) is an essential component of the experiential learning approach since it gives students the chance to observe and reflect on their experiences in the team project (cf Kolb learning cycle). This reflection is critical to the formation of abstract concepts and generalisations from their experiences.

The journal is not meant to be a personal 'venting' place, rather an opportunity to reflect and report on team interactions in a businesslike way, focussing on the issues not the person. In this way students can improve their business writing skills as well as their ability to notice and observe OB in action.

### Student Requirements

- Students are expected to make weekly entries in a word document under six key topics:
  - Forming the team.
  - Developing the team.
  - Sharing and organising the work.
  - Spotting and sorting problems.
  - Performing as a team.
  - Progress towards becoming a self-managing team (Concluding entry).
- Under each topic, students are expected to record:
  - What happened in team interactions – what they noticed about what the team did, how they did it and how people felt about it.
  - Analysis of what happened (group processes) drawing on OB theory and concepts.
  - Ways that task performance and team maintenance can be improved.
- Entries should be dated.

### Formative RJ Assessment

- Students are required to hand in their RJ for the first Topic 'Forming the team' in week 4.
- They must print out their journal entry and attach it to the cover sheet.
- Go through the criteria with them and encourage them to have a go at assessing their journal themselves before handing it in (but leave the cover sheet clear so that you can give them feedback).
- Do not ask peers to provide feedback on Reflective Journals.

### Summative RJ Assessment

- Students are required to hand in all their Reflective Journals in week 11.
- They will need to print out their entries under the six topic headings.
- Stress that they must include a final entry which looks at how the team has progressed towards self-management (NB tell them that teams take time to become self-managing, they must describe progress towards even if they are not yet there).

### Tips for RJ

- The journal is most powerful when students focus on a particular topic/theory/issue and explore how it has been demonstrated in team interactions or how it might explain what has been happening.
- Refer students to the exemplars in the Learning Guide. Take them through some of the examples in class to help bring them alive.
- They will get formative feedback in Week 5 but invite students who are having difficulty to make a time to see you to discuss.
- This component is probably the one which is most critical to success in MG204A. If students fail this component then they probably haven't 'got' the subject.

- Monitor how teams are going so that you are able to tell whether a student is inventing their RJ. In past semesters, some students have constructed a fantasy team with no grounding in reality at all – usually when the team is having difficulties. If you keep an eye on team development and issues, you should be able to make sure this doesn't happen.
- It's worth reminding students that teams in real life experience many problems and difficulties which only get worse if they are ignored. The RJ can help to explore issues safely and think about ways to improve.
- Discourage personal diary style – eg don't use names, write in third person etc.

### **Criteria for Marking RJ**

- The RJ should give attention to:
  - What happened and how.
  - Analysis and critical thinking of what happened using Organisational Behaviour theory.
  - Suggesting improvements in task performance and group maintenance.
  - Evaluating development towards becoming a self-managing team.
- RJ should also address progress according to the six stages specified:
  - Forming the team.
  - Developing the team.
  - Sharing and organising the work.
  - Spotting and sorting problems.
  - Performing as a team.
  - Becoming a self-managing team.
- RJ's should use business reporting language rather than personal diary style to encourage students to observe and analyse behaviours and interactions rather than focussing on the person (therefore problem not person). Discourage use of names for example.