**Tips for Better Team Work**

**By Lei Li**

Working on a team project can be a challenge task given the fact many students work full time or part time and each student may have different schedule. Below are some tips for successful teamwork.

* Be explicit about member’s role in a team. Every member should have a role and should be clear about their roles in a team. For example, a team should have a team leader or coordinator whose responsibility could include organizing meetings and monitoring the overall progress of the project, etc. For another example, it’s also nice to have a team recorder to make sure that all items are submitted on time.
* Divide and conquer. Divide the project into small tasks and assign them the members or member can voluntarily sign up certain task. Everyone should contribute to the project. We don’t want a team member over reach. At the same time, we don’t have someone has a free ride.
* Set up milestones for the project and impose internal deadlines for those milestones. Be specific about each member’s responsibility on each milestone.
* Have clear communication expectations. After the team is formed, team should reach a consensus on what tools team members should use to communicate with each other and be explicit about the expectations on communication turn-around time.
* Have a regular team meeting. Asynchronous communication is important. It’s even more critical for a team to meet regularly, either face-to-face or online. Preset meetings give member a sense of commitment and responsibilities.
* Be supportive to other team members. This is what teamwork meant to be. Every team member should try their best to contribute to the group. If a member misses something due to an unexpected event, be understandable and offer help if you are available. But a member keeps missing deadlines or under-performing, the team leader may need intervene or notify course coordinator if things are getting more serious.

**Recommended tools for team collaboration**. There are a lot of collaboration systems for teams to work together. Based on my research [1], I recommend the groups to use Google Hangouts/drive for team collaboration.

**References**

[1] Shen, Y., Li, L., Zheng, G., & Guo, R. (2017). An Evaluation Framework for Selecting Collaboration Systems for Student Teamwork. *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (IJICTE)*, *13*(2), 65-81.