



“TEAMwork vs. TASKwork” Learning Object

Link to online version: <https://fl-rda.org/teamwork-vs-taskwork-learning-object/>

Title	TEAMwork vs. TASKwork										
1-sentence summary	Highlight the important role group dynamics play in collaborations										
Time to implement	45-60 minutes										
Purpose of tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help members of a team distinguish between team-related and task-related activities • In differentiating these activities, help teams find ways to support their practical tasks while also creating a healthy cooperative environment • Create a more cohesive, positive, and high-functioning collaboration 										
Definition table	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>TEAMwork</th> <th>TASKwork</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Definition</td> <td>Attitudes, behaviors, and ways of thinking (cognition) required to function effectively in an interdependent team.</td> <td>What needs to be accomplished to meet the team's goals and complete objectives.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Examples</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust (or distrust) • Team member communication • How conflict is dealt with • Ways members give praise and are rewarded • Knowing roles and responsibilities </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence in the study design and implementation • Data collection, analysis, and dissemination • Understanding the overarching research question and objectives </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			TEAMwork	TASKwork	Definition	Attitudes, behaviors, and ways of thinking (cognition) required to function effectively in an interdependent team.	What needs to be accomplished to meet the team's goals and complete objectives.	Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust (or distrust) • Team member communication • How conflict is dealt with • Ways members give praise and are rewarded • Knowing roles and responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence in the study design and implementation • Data collection, analysis, and dissemination • Understanding the overarching research question and objectives
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The steps	<p>There are three parts to this activity, with guidelines in the "TEAMwork vs. TASKwork worksheet" and outlined below. Each part is estimated to take about 15-20 minutes. Just a subset of these parts can be used with a group, if time saving is needed.</p> <p>Before beginning the activity, consider whether it will be conducted in-person or online. If in-person, the worksheets may be printed for everyone to documents their ideas through writing, with these ideas shared out to the group at the end of each part described below. If conducted online, this document could be shared digitally so that live editing and contributions from members of the team could be captured simultaneously and be visible to all.</p> <p>PART 1: Characterize high-performing and struggling teams <i>15-20 minutes</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On the first page of the worksheet, list in the first column 										

what a high-performing team looks and feels like (at their “Peak”), and in the second column how a team struggling to cooperate looks and feels (down in the “Valley”).

2. After a period of idea generation in each column, have members share their ideas related to what well-functioning and struggling teams look and feel like.

PART 2: Label characteristics as “TEAMwork” or “TASKWork”

15-20 minutes

1. After completing Part 1, have members spend some time reading over the definitions and examples of TEAMwork and TASKwork listed on the second page of the worksheet.
2. Next, they should label the “Peak” and “Valley” team characteristics listed on the first page’s table as being related to TEAMwork or TASKwork using the words “TEAM” and “TASK,” respectively.
3. Note that not all activities can be neatly sorted into the “TEAMwork” or “TASKwork” category. In some cases, activities may involve a close integration of both teamwork and taskwork. The important consideration for a team is to not focus exclusively on their taskwork at the expense of laying a solid foundation for, and continuing to reinforce, productive engagement among team members. In these cases of overlap, the characteristic can be labeled as “TEAM/TASK” or “BOTH.”
4. This labeling step can be done collaboratively, with individuals taking turns labeling the characteristics in a shared document. Alternatively, participants may label their own table independently and then share out to the group examples of the “Peak” and “Valley” characteristics that they labeled as being “TEAM,” “TASK,” or both.

PART 3: Brainstorm ways to sustain and recover teams

15-20 minutes

1. After gaining a better understanding of both the team- and task-related aspects of a team in Part 2, participants are invited to generate ideas for how to sustain *their own team* as high-functioning as well as how to help it recover from struggles. Using the third page of the worksheet, the sustaining ideas should be captured in the first column of the table and recovery ideas in the second column.
2. As with the other parts, idea generation can be captured individually and then shared out to the group, or conducted collaboratively in a shared document.
3. Additional reflections on the ideas for helping the team may be discussed at the end (and as part of future team meetings; see ideas for next steps below).

<p>The outcome</p>	<p>A greater awareness of what can lead teams to “sink” or “swim.” While groups typically focus on the tasks they must accomplish, they may not realize or forget the importance of also attending to the teamwork aspects of the collaboration.</p>
<p>Example use cases</p>	<p>A Team in Turmoil</p> <p>Ideally, a team will complete an activity like this <i>before</i> conflict strikes. In doing such foundational work, instances of conflict can be mitigated or avoided. However, if a team finds itself in crisis and in need of an intervention to facilitate discussion, parts of this activity may be helpful. If the team is seeking a neutral ground to discuss issues, it may be helpful for members to consider how <i>other</i> teams may struggle and perform well. Part 1 of this activity could enable this discussion. The conclusion of Part 1 could be an opportunity to discuss how teams struggle in general, or specifically how the current team is struggling, and how they can recover. The two guiding questions from Part 3 may be helpful to introduce at this discussion stage.</p> <p>Setting the Agenda</p> <p>It is one thing to learn about the importance of both team- and task-related dynamics of a team (“talk the talk”), but it is a bigger lift to implement processes in the team that continue attention to both of these items (“walk the walk”). After completing this activity, one way for teams to keep both dynamics front of mind is to add agenda items related to each. Groups are likely to have agendas full of task-related items, such as deadlines and budget meetings, but are less likely to include team-related items. What is needed to support a healthy, cooperative environment is likely to vary across teams, but some examples of teamwork agenda items may be celebrating accomplishments of members (or the group overall), encouraging respectful debate and dissenting opinions, and checking in on everyone’s workload and offering support where needed. While it may seem odd to write items like these on an agenda, it is an excellent way to make sure they do not go unnoticed and unattended.</p> <p>Additionally, making processes like “Thumbs Up/Down,” to get a temperature read across members of the group, part of the typical way the team interacts can also continue to enhance inclusion and engagement of all members.</p>
<p>Q&A:</p>	
<p>- When should this be applied?</p>	<p>The increased understanding of team dynamics achieved through this activity is helpful for teams that will be engaged over the long term. Teams that meet regularly, such as laboratory groups or colleagues in an office, will find this a valuable activity to help them</p>

	<p>better understand what can impede healthy working relationships and productivity. Through discussion toward the end of the activity related to making plans for sustaining a productive team and helping it recover when it struggles, the group is prepared to recognize and help address issues that arise.</p>
<p>- When <i>not</i> to use this?</p>	<p>As noted in response to the prior question, while this can be a valuable activity for any team, it may be less useful or a priority for a short-term team, such as one meeting infrequently or for less than a month. Given the activity takes relatively long to implement (up to an hour) and makes plans for supporting the team over time (Part 3), it may not be as imperative to engage in as other activities for teams meeting for a short time. However, one or more of the parts can be implemented independently to shorten the length.</p>
<p>- What should I do next?</p>	<p>Include in team meeting agendas both TEAMwork and TASKwork items to emphasize the importance of these topics and continue building strong working relationships among members. The activity outlined above can give everyone a common language for talking about group dynamics, but it must be continually attended to in order to sustain a cooperative and productive team.</p> <p>Consider two follow-up activities to continue supporting team interactions and fostering a supportive environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in a Shared Team Roles activity • Draft a Collaboration Agreement
<p>- What evidence or sources is this based on?</p>	<p>The distinction between and importance of teamwork and taskwork are based on research by Stephen Fiore and colleagues; see a few relevant citations below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiore, S.M., Gabelica, C., Wiltshire, T.J., & Stokols, D. (2019). Training to be a (team) scientist. In K.L. Hall, A.L. Vogel, & R.T. Croyle (Eds.), <i>Strategies for Team Science Success</i> (pp. 421-444). Springer. • Fiore, S. M. (2008). Interdisciplinarity as Teamwork: How the Science of Teams can inform Team Science. <i>Small Group Research</i>, 39(3), 251-277. • Fiore, S.M., Carter, D.R., & Asencio, R. (2015). Conflict, Trust, and Cohesion: Examining Affective and Attitudinal Factors in Science Teams. In E. Salas, W.B. Vessey, & A.X. Estrada (Eds.), <i>Team Cohesion: Advances in Psychological Theory, Methods and Practice</i> (pp. 271-301). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
<p>- What if I want to learn more? What are other complementary</p>	<p>Articles and resources related to scientific collaborations abound! The first three resources below are comical accounts (full of truth) of successful and unsuccessful collaborations. The final two resources are more comprehensive guides to team science, which may be</p>

tools?	<p>skimmed for helpful chapters and advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Ten Simple Rules to Ruin a Collaborative Environment</u>• <u>Ten Simple Rules for a Successful Collaboration</u>• <u>Ten Simple Rules for a Successful Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration</u>• <u>Collaboration & Team Science Field Guide</u>• <u>NRC's report on Enhancing the Effectiveness of Team Science</u>
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TEAMwork vs. TASKwork – Brief Definitions

For guidance on using this tool: <https://fl-rda.org/teamwork-vs-taskwork-learning-object/>

	TEAMwork	TASKwork
Definition	Attitudes, behaviors, and ways of thinking (cognition) required to function effectively in an interdependent team.	What needs to be accomplished to meet the team's goals and complete objectives.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Trust (or distrust)● Team member communication● How conflict is dealt with● Ways members give praise and are rewarded● Knowing roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Confidence in the study design and implementation● Data collection, analysis, and dissemination● Understanding the overarching research question and objectives



TEAMwork vs. TASKwork – Full Definitions

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	TEAMwork	TASKwork
Definition	<p>Attitudes, behaviors, and ways of thinking (cognition) required to function effectively in an interdependent team.</p> <p><i>Attitudes relate to your mindset and the way you view your teammates.</i></p> <p><i>Behaviors are the actions and skills that support team interactions.</i></p> <p><i>Cognition includes knowledge related to team members .</i></p>	<p>What needs to be accomplished to meet the team’s goals and complete objectives.</p> <p><i>Attitudes relate to your mindset and the way you view efficacy in completing tasks and reaching goals.</i></p> <p><i>Behaviors are the actions and skills needed to accomplish a task or goal.</i></p> <p><i>Cognition includes knowledge related to how to do a task or what task needs to be done.</i></p>
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attitude examples: feelings of trust (or distrust), perceived level of priority of the team relative to other work responsibilities ● Behavior examples: how members communicate, how they deal with conflict, how they share leadership, how they are praised and rewarded ● Cognition examples: knowing members’ roles and responsibilities, recognizing others’ expertise and experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attitude examples: confidence in the capacity of the team to implement the study design, feeling technology and other resources will meet the team’s needs ● Behavior examples: activities of data collection and analysis, dissemination of results ● Cognition examples: understanding the team’s overarching research question and objectives

Consider the acronym “ABC” for remembering the key components of TEAMwork and TASKwork!

(A = Attitudes, B = Behaviors, and C = Cognition)





TEAMwork vs. TASKwork – The Peaks & Valleys of Teaming

An activity to highlight the important role group dynamics play in collaborations

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PART 1: List in the columns below what a high-performing team looks and feels like (at their “Peak”), as well as how a team struggling to cooperate looks and feels (down in the “Valley”).

<i>Describe a team at “Peak” performance</i>	<i>Describe a team down in the “Valley”</i>
	

PART 2: Use the definitions and examples of TEAMwork and TASKwork in the below table to tag the “Peak” and “Valley” characteristics of teams you listed in the prior table with the word “TEAM” or “TASK.” (**Note:** *Not all activities can be neatly sorted into the “TEAMwork” or “TASKwork” category. In some cases, activities may involve a close integration of both teamwork and taskwork. In these cases, include both labels.*)

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Consider the acronym “ABC” for remembering the key components of TEAMwork and TASKwork!

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PART 3: Generate ideas related to the TEAMwork and TASKwork of a group, both for how to sustain a high-functioning team as well as for how to help a struggling team improve.

<i>How will we keep this team at the top?</i>	<i>How can this team recover from declines?</i>

Remember, the TEAM accomplishes the TASKS!