CE-2 | Collaboration Information Systems for Student Projects

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the IS requirements for student project collaborations.
2. Discuss how to use collaboration tools to improve team communication.
3. Describe how to use collaboration tools to share content.
4. Explain how to use collaboration tools to manage tasks.
5. Determine which collaboration information system is right for your team.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- What are the IS requirements for student project collaborations?
  - Required features
  - Nice-to-have features
  - Collaboration tool characteristics
- How can you use collaboration tools to improve team communication?
- How can you use collaboration tools to share content?
  - Shared content with no control
  - Shared content with version management on Google Drive
  - Shared content with version control
- How can you use collaboration tools to manage tasks?
  - Sharing a task list on Google Grid
  - Sharing a task list using Microsoft SharePoint
- Which collaboration information system is right for your team?
  - The minimal collaboration tool set
  - The good collaboration tool set
  - The comprehensive collaboration tool set
  - Choosing the set for your team
  - Don't forget procedures and people!

USING YOUR KNOWLEDGE

CE2-1. *Evaluate Q1. Based on your experience as a team member, do you agree that the three requirements are mandatory for a collaborative team? Justify your answer. Modify those requirements in any way you see fit to better describe your own collaborative team experience. Do you find any of the nice-to-have requirements*

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unnecessary? Would you add any others? Do you think any of the collaboration tool characteristics requirements are unnecessary? Would you add any?

Student responses will vary depending on their specific prior experiences with collaborative teams and collaborative information systems. In your discussion, emphasize the value of feedback and iteration to teams, but also emphasize that the team members must have the skills to accept critiques, criticism, and revisions of their work. In some student teams, the focus is strictly on fulfilling a requirement and not necessarily producing the highest quality work product possible through the collaborative efforts of the team members. As a result, student teams might not recognize the value of content sharing. In addition, students may be reticent about holding other team members accountable for their tasks, so project planning and management may not be high on their list of requirements. (LO: 1, Learning Outcome: Explain how IS can enhance systems of collaboration and teamwork, AACSB: Reflective Thinking Skills)

CE2-2. *Based on your answers to question CE2-1, revise the list in Figure CE2-1 so that it is appropriate for your team experience. Discuss your revised list with others and describe any changes they would make to it.*

Student responses will vary. If students omit any of the required features listed in CE2-1, insist that they justify that omission and are prepared to defend their position. It is important that students recognize the value of these features even though using them will require that students alter their approach to team projects. (LO: 1, Learning Outcome: Explain how IS can enhance systems of collaboration and teamwork, AACSB: Reflective Thinking Skills)

CE2-3. *Choose one of the three alternatives described in Q5 for use by your collaborative team. To do so, answer the following questions (if possible, answer these questions with your team):*

a. *Using your and your teammates' answers to question CE2-2, create your team's list of requirements.*

The list of collaboration requirements will vary among student groups. You should push your students to discover the benefits of tools beyond the "minimal" set in Figure CE2-21, since this set consists of tools students probably already use. (LO: 5, Learning Outcome: Explain how IS can enhance systems of collaboration and teamwork, AACSB: Use of Information Technology)

b. *Create a list of criteria for selecting collaboration tools and creating a collaboration IS. Start with the items in the first column of Figure CE2-21, but add, modify, or delete items depending on your answer to question CE2-3a.*

The list of criteria for selecting collaboration tools will vary among student groups. You should push your students to discover the benefits of tools beyond the "minimal" set in Figure CE2-16, since this set consists of tools students

probably already use. (LO: 1, Learning Outcome: Explain how IS can enhance systems of collaboration and teamwork, AACSB: Use of Information Technology)

c. *Score the three alternatives in Q5 against your requirements and your criteria. If you wish, change any of the elements of those three alternatives to create a fourth alternative. Score it as well.*

The scoring of the three alternative tool sets in Q5 will vary depending on the students' answers to parts 'a' and 'b'. (LO: 5, Learning Outcome: Explain how IS can enhance systems of collaboration and teamwork, AACSB: Use of Information Technology)

d. *Based on your answer to question CE2-3c, select a collaboration tool set. Explain your selection.*

The selection of a specific tool set will vary among the student groups. Look for some recognition that despite the learning curve, there are strong reasons for gaining skills in using tools from the "comprehensive" tool set. If students do not recognize this, push them to explain why they feel this way. (LO: 5, Learning Outcome: Explain how IS can enhance systems of collaboration and teamwork, AACSB: Use of Information Technology)

e. *Given your answer to question CE2-3d, how will you construct your collaboration IS? Specifically, what procedures will you need to develop and how will your team members obtain training? Will you need to have any special jobs or roles for your team members? If so, describe them.*

Procedures will be important to the group's success in using their selected collaboration tool set because people are likely to fall back into old familiar patterns (the "minimal" tool set) without some commitment to change. Students should commit to going through training together as a team, possibly using online training resources like Lynda.com. At least initially, the team should appoint someone to monitor the group's use of the tools and help ensure the successful adoption of the new ways of working together collaboratively. (LO: 5, Learning Outcome: Explain how IS can enhance systems of collaboration and teamwork, AACSB: Use of Information Technology)