**Work Group Assessment :
Group 2 “The Gang”**

**Lauren Milne**

**Spring 2013**

Over the last few weeks, our class has been divided into four small groups to work on a project for Northwest Alliance for College Access (NwACA), in Bellingham, WA. This project is to support NwACA in finding new strategies and ideas for reaching out to First Generation students after they have been accepted to college. My group consists of Gio, Celia, Kim, April, Crystal, and Olivia.

 The goal of my work group, over the last several weeks, has been to create an FAQ (Frequently Asked Question) section. The difference between our section and a normal FAQ section is that we have been formulating questions that a frequently left unanswered or not thought of by the questioning person. In order to meet our goal, our team has split itself into two ad hoc committees: *Personal Life*, which is led by Olivia, Kim, and Celia, Crystal, and *Academic Life*, which is led by April, Gio, and I. As the names suggest, one group is in charge of coming up with questions about a student’s personal life (i.e. groceries, cleaning, roommates) and the other about a student’s campus life (academics, activities, and resources available).

 For me, the highest points of this work group have been the continuous participation from every member, the unspoken (but obvious), mutual respect, and the organization that has occurred. In regards to participation, our group has been fully present aside from a sickness and a funeral. When referring to mutual respect, I have never felt animosity nor have I noticed distress between anyone. Not only that, but everyone is treated as an equal within the group. Each one of us is a leader (I will reflect on this later). Above all, I believe organization is the reason we have been able to have such a strong, supportive group. Not only do we meet as both a large group and two separate ad hoc committees, we also have created a Facebook group and have placed links to two separate GoogleDocs so that both groups can update and view each other’s progress at any point throughout the week. All in all, it is hard for me to pinpoint a low point that I’ve had thus far. I suppose, if I had to pick, the lowest point would be that we are sometimes slow at getting our group an update (and physical proof) of our progress. Though our organization methods have allowed us the ability to do so, some of us (myself included) have not imputed or updated their GoggleDoc sections on a regular basis.

 Leadership has been a wonderful thing to witness within our group. It seems that a different person takes on the role of a leader each day. In fact, I can’t pinpoint a person that has been more of a leader than another because our roles blend so well together. April set up the Facebook page and GoogleDocs, but the creation of both things was my idea (I’ve always liked the planning stages more than implementation). Olivia collected everyone’s contact information and shared it with all of us. Kim and Gio have planned group meetings, and Celia and Crystal have been great positive support (I consider this an imperative leadership quality) and are on top of submitting their information.

 At the beginning, our communication skills were strictly spoken word. We would read all the steps that were required to be completed and then speak up when a thought came to mind. Once the project really got rolling, we added written word to the mix through email, text messages, Facebook, and GoogleDocs. Our nonverbal communication has consistently consisted of eye contact (especially from Olivia and myself), close proximity (a lot of leaning in toward the person speaking/being spoken to), and the movement of hands and heads (the nodding of the head in acknowledgement and the movement of hands to visualize comparative data). The only suggestion for improvement in our communication is that, when a group member asks a question or requests something, we all respond in a quick manner. That said, my suggestion is that we are timelier with our responses.

 Our group’s main method of decision making has been the reaching of consensus between each member. And it’s never a simple agreement to one individual’s suggestion. Instead it is the start of an idea upon which others expand until a more solid plan is decided upon. Because of our thorough communication techniques (as discussed previously) and our decision making strategies, my group has yet to experience internal conflict. If conflict exists, it was our original inability to come up with and understand our personal objective, when we were afraid of interfering with another group’s goals. I have no suggestions for improvement in decision making at this time. However, for when my group does have internal conflict, I can only suggest that we discuss it now before that occurs so that we can come up with a counteractive solution.

 Diversity has affected my group in many ways. Immediately, once the ideas were thrown out into the open about what different objectives we could undertake, obvious personal differences were made known. First and foremost, we all had a different opinion on how to describe our objective (and who knows, it might become more apparent after reading each of our papers). Olivia constantly spoke for the group at the beginning, but, because our opinions and interpretations differed, we would join in and correct her by restating it in our own words. Each of us also has different backgrounds and abilities that affective the group. I was raised in a family of mathematicians, so I am the only one in my group comfortable with looking into keeping college students with finances. April’s father works for Microsoft, so she is very comfortable with technology. Gio is heavily involved with clubs and associations on campus, so he is the most knowledgeable in that area. Olivia is from a very outspoken family, so she tends to represent us in class. Kim, Celia, and Crystal are very quiet. I have not personally witnessed how their backgrounds affect our group as of yet. Finally, it is because of different work styles that the Facebook page and GoogleDocs were made and email/phone contacts were shared. I wanted to make sure that the soft spoken members of our group had a voice.

To conclude, I have thoroughly enjoyed my work group this quarter. They are friendly, productive, and incredibly intelligent/creative individuals. Though there have been stressful moments for some because of a lack of direction, I’ve actually been quite comfortable with this project all quarter. After all, if you create harmony amongst your group, you can achieve anything!