Group Project Reflection

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Submitted to:
Dr. Jan Robertson
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Group Members:

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Summary of Collaboration:

Our group began our journey on May 19th, when an email was sent out to everyone to get a feel to what topic we were interested in doing. From this we narrowed it down to a starter statement, “Entering the new millennium, the market approach to education seems to be the common theme as each school district is strategizing new ways to balance their budget. What are the implications if this initiative is to be continued in the long run?” After the group decided that this was what they wanted to pursue, we went out on our own to do some general research in this area and to suggest some readings around this. We reconvened on June 4th on V-Class to discuss our findings. However, there were only three people that attended this session. Even with three people, we still found it hard to come to a consensus to whether the topic was narrowed down enough. To exacerbate things further, after about 30 minutes, we experienced technical difficulties. As a result, we found the meeting somewhat non-productive. An email marked urgent was sent out the following day, outlining some of the things that were discussed in V-Class. From this, we clearly set out the roles, responsibilities, and the timeline for the project. The email also clearly outlined what was best practice in collaborative activities. It was obvious some group members were apologetic for their absence and decided that what was decided was fair. By June 13th, we had the PowerPoint slides compiled. Some adjustments were made and the slides were uploaded to WebCT. The starter statement was uploaded to the ChangeL agency.

Context:

The majority correspondence took place using WebCT email. The majority of the email in the latter parts of the project was responded to within a turnaround of 24 hours. Understandably, June is a busy month for teachers so multi-tasking is not uncommon. However, it was clear which group members were better at time management. Nevertheless, everyone persevered and the task was accomplished on time. In this group projects where teams are assigned, there will always be a feeling out stage where people look to others to who will take charge. From my perspective, Teresa and I started it off adding our literature research; Alfred added his research skills and started the seminar on the Change-L; Dolores put together the bibliography; and David put everything together in a PowerPoint slide show. We all showed our strength in one-way or another which is what a collaborative project should be.
Strengths:

Email correspondence was the quickest way to communicate with others. Anything that was unclear was clarified or corroborated by another member. No group members were afraid to ask questions and everyone took on a responsibility. The best practices of maximum response time (24 hours), setting up meetings, adding attachments (sample research notes), preparing ahead of time for synchronous meetings, and breaking tasks apart for each group member were followed religiously. When David could not post the PowerPoint presentation because he was with his wife who was having premature labour, Teresa stepped up and finished it. David then stepped in later with the corrected version.

Weaknesses/Problems:

In the early parts of the project, it was difficult to get everyone on board. This was partly due to everyone getting a feel for the course and for each other. For those who have never taken a course online, organization and time management are critical in the early part of the course. How one utilizes these skills often sets the path to success or failure. This group project was put together, but not without hiccups. Some group members did not know how to carbon copy the messages to other group members thus some messages some members got it and others did not. Other group members replied to messages not knowing that it only responded to the one person who sent it. Nevertheless, the project was completed and that is all that can be expected from a group of five who have never worked together before.