Turning Student Groups Into Teams

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Overview

This project examined how a group of Level 6 students returning from placement year worked with a group of Level 4 students in order to turn them into teams.

Group work or teamwork remains very much in focus within autonomous learning and employability agenda and, whether or not it improves learning/output or not, it is set to remain a feature of higher education and the workplace.

Level 4 student groups were responsible for making the initial contact with their Level 6 leaders. Once contact was made they were allowed to run up to ten meetings.

Once the meetings were completed they were debriefed and asked the following questions: What was good about our team? What skills did the team need to improve? What skills did individuals have that contributed to the team effort? What team skills do I personally need to improve?

Analysis

Sixty six out of a possible ninety meetings were held.

Student comments:

'We tend to talk over each other whereas with this group if I had anything to say they would sit and listen and then ask me questions.'

'Y thinks her own peer groups are as they are because the team members have worked with each other so often that they feel able to shout at each other and tell each other to shut up.'

One Level 6 student spent a lot of time emphasising the need for good communications and good relationships, and particularly the need to listen.

The analysis of the blog and interview data will be ongoing because of the nature of the phenomenological approach that has been adopted.

Conclusion

Bearing in mind the limitations of the data I would suggest that the majority of level 4 students who participated in the survey felt in general that they had been able to develop a number of team related skills within the Information Systems group work module.
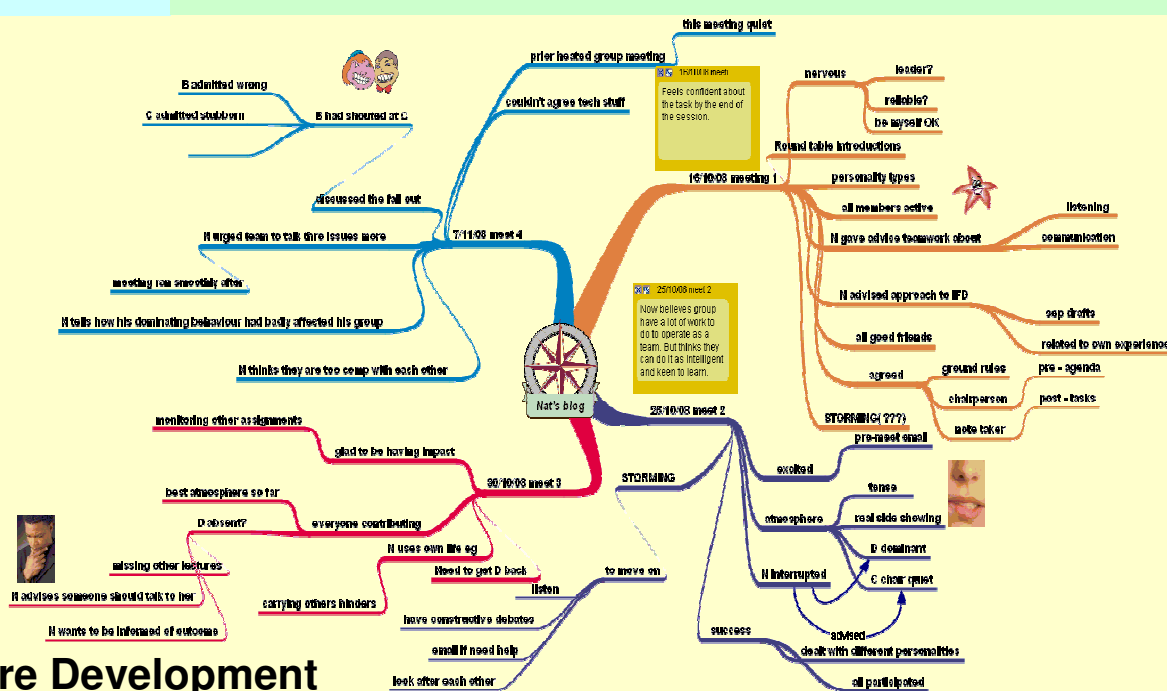
Future Development

Future challenges include: the maturity of the students compared to those who have completed a placement year; getting volunteers to do this for free.

I would like to explore the possibility of maintaining one relationship as one of the Level 6 students starts their graduate training scheme. This could create a fully realised escalator of support which starts at entry to university and continues into employment.

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