

Individual Evaluation
Service Project Assignment
Group Comm and Leadership
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This community service project assignment provided an opportunity for my group members and I to try our stuff at putting on an event. A successful event is the culmination of a collective effort that mostly occurs out of sight. My group went through this behind-the-scenes process to put on our event, which ended up being delivering personalized cards and flower bouquets to residents of the Wesley Village nursing home in Wilmore, Ky. The success of our delivery was due to solid group dynamics, efficient planning, and competent execution.

A good group is like a well-oiled machine: there's a satisfying feel to how it runs. This dynamic was largely present in my group. This was because we had good attitudes and shared norms which enabled good communication. We each had our own personalities and got across in our own ways that we were on board and ready to go (or should I say "ready to row"?). Chloe solicited feedback and did checks to see if we were all in agreement. Hannah readily offered to do research to optimize our efforts. Amber was very active during brainstorming. Rachel and I were quieter, but we each made a point to make contributions in meetings and reliably did our part. Our positive attitudes were our choice, but they are also an Asbury norm, and not the only norm we shared. The group's shared norms were very helpful. One shared norm was the turn-taking style we shared, in which people didn't interrupt and used a more formal register of speech to punctuate group discourse. Another was the norm of participation, which requires that everyone add something to the discussion and signal their understanding or lack thereof. Our good attitudes and shared norms facilitated efficient group communication. For one, group members were responsive. In-person, they engaged with the conversation. Over mediated

channels, responsiveness took the form of quickly responding to messages and moving the task forward. This responsiveness enabled effective and satisfying group planning.

The smooth group dynamics enabled effective planning. This planning largely took the form of brainstorming and logistics. Brainstorming was an open-ended process of arraying possible goals and means. Logistics was a logical process of scheduling, resource management, and choosing an option that fit our constraints. It was necessary to work around the schedules of the group members and the nursing home as well as Asbury's extensive student event offerings. One kind of thing the group had to plan were our out-of-class meetings. The group had to rework our scheduled time for any given meeting regularly as situations changed and one or another group member could no longer meet. This leads into the idea that there is no perfect schedule; we eventually had to settle on a decision that wasn't optimal for everyone. But the point of efficient planning isn't perfection, it's working out a good final plan in a reasonable amount of time.

Having a good plan in a reasonable amount of time allows for the group to get to what might be called the "real work"; the execution. In our project, the execution included gathering materials, contacting other parties, and running the events. The execution of our project was facilitated by the diverse skills of the group members. Chloe was an excellent leader-manager, keeping our vision for the project in front of us and running, in an unofficial capacity, each of our group meetings. Hannah, with her experience in theatre production, took the initiative to do research. One example being looking into where we should buy our materials in order to get the most bang for our buck and stay within budget. One last example of team diversity being helpful was me; during our event at the Stuce where students could volunteer to make cards and bouquets, I immediately gravitated to cutting out paper and ribbon for wrapping the flowers. This was a personal quirk of mine, because of childhood experiences of helping my mom cook and

my dad with home improvement; I've been trained to get the materials ready for the skilled person to make into a finished product.

The project execution went well because group members followed through on completing the parts of the work that their varied competencies made a good fit for them. But it was still necessary to stray from the plans we'd drawn up. Mostly this took the form of cutting what had to be cut. We ended up forgoing plans of making chocolate covered pretzels and we ended up cutting down on the number of flowers in each bouquet. This was to stay within the budget we had determined, which existed to keep the expenses for the group members down.

As we experienced during this assignment, an event itself is just the tip of the iceberg. Under the surface is a surprising amount of time and variety of tasks that go toward making the event a success. For our group and this event specifically, our harmonious group dynamic, efficient planning, and finally our execution of "the real work" leading up to and during the event are what made it a success. It was successful in that the residents of the nursing home had a joyful experience receiving homemade, personalized cards and flower bouquets. This outcome was worth the effort and should encourage us to contribute well to groups that make a difference.