

# Discussion on the Construction of a High-Performing Teaching Team in Colleges and Universities

Xiaoxia Huang

Shanghai Normal University Tianhua College, Shanghai 201815, China

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**Abstract:** A high-performing teaching team plays an important role in improving the quality of teaching, promoting the efficiency of team work. This essay studies the characteristics of a high-performing teaching team and what are the reasons and components of an efficient team. And gives the suggestions on the building of teaching team in the colleges and universities.

**Keywords:** High-performing; Teaching team; Team members' role

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## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, more and more companies are using the work in team thanks to the benefits that it creates. In fact, teams permit to members to share ideas, point of views, common skills and knowledge and result to produce a better work.

Actually, for the colleges and universities, it also makes sense to organize its work activity in teams if they want to improve teachers' performances and increase benefits: by thinking and cogitating together, the teaching team can bring the colleges and universities to go further and better. But, to do so teaching teams have to respect some rules and should have clear and practicable objectives. Moreover, a high-performing teaching team activity is based on the qualities and competences of the leader. In fact, the team leader has to listen carefully and understand everyone's opinion before making decisions in order to have a long-term development. Besides, Belbin's team role theory proved that team members' role has also high importance in the building of a high-performing team. The 9 roles depend on cooperation, encouragement, complement of each other to work for achieving common goals. It has a great significance on the construction of teaching team in the colleges and universities.

## 2. The Characteristics of a high-performing teaching team

A high-performing teaching team is a team consisted of individuals who share the same teaching mission and work together to achieve the common goals through effective communication, efficient collaboration and mutual trust. Here are the characteristics of a high-performing teaching team.

### 2.1 Commitment to a common goal

First of all, a high-performing teaching team should set up clear and achievable goals before acting. And the goals should be shared and clearly understood by each of the team members. The goals should be set once a semester. They are based on previously year's results and concerning the individual objectives. Once the members are clear about the teaching objectives and priorities in mind, they will consistently work together to support and emphasize the overall teaching mission and objectives of the team.

### 2.2 Specific and challenging objectives

Compared with the common goals, a specific and challenging objective creates a sense of urgency that inspires the team members to work harder to achieve it. As they reach for more challenging goals and more complicated tasks they are going to need the collaboration of others and mutual trust to complete the challenges.

### **2.3 Individual and mutual accountability**

In a high-performing teaching team, not only should members take their own responsibilities to accomplish the task, but also they should be involved in decision-making and problem-solving procedures. It is necessary for them to have a sense of mutual accountability to accept more responsibility for solving the problems on behalf of the team. All of their actions have to be coordinated in order to achieve common goals. There is trust among the team members in their work, and they are sometimes working in duo, so they have to rely on each other.

### **2.4 Cohesion**

Cohesion is forged by positive relationships and mutual trust, common goals and fates, external threats and competitions as well as the achievements. In high-performing teaching team, members stick together and are more united and cooperative in achieving the teaching goals. They are more committed to the teaching mission and team-building activities to build team spirit and relationships for respect and trust. They develop an effective communication, friendly and positive team environment, value synergism and interdependence, and efficient collaboration, which is essential for the success of a high-performing teaching team. Lack of cohesion in a team environment can affect the team performance because of unnecessary stress and tension among team members.

## **3. Suggestions on building a high-performing teaching team**

### **3.1 Lead**

A high-performing teaching team should have leaders to define and confirm teaching objectives and priorities, motivate members to work, facilitate collaboration, identify and resolve conflicts, manage and reward performance, and generate development opportunities. A successful team leader clarifies priorities; encourage members' active participation, and work to create a supportive and positive team environment for members to work.

### **3.2 Norms and rules**

It is necessary to motivate staff and building positive norms, rules, and values among the team to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the team. Clear norms and rules make team members more aware of their responsibilities and actively act their roles in the team. Additionally, a high-performing teaching team should have productive, effective and well-managed meetings which efficiently use members' time. It should facilitate focused, necessary, and timely meetings for decision-making, problem-solving, dissemination of information and improvement of team members' skills.

### **3.3 Group composition**

Dealing with today's complicated problems and tasks requires teams to think more broadly about the group composition. Under the trend of technology and globalization, more and more colleges and universities are encouraged to consider about the diversity of team members such as the different course majors, geographical regions, and cultures. A high-performing teaching team should make the right mix of members' skills, experiences, and personalities to improve the team effectiveness.

### **3.4 Complementary skills and roles**

Belbin classified the components of a balanced team into 9 types: 1. Plant, responsible for the design of teaching activities, task planning and other team-building work. 2. Monitor-evaluator, takes charge of review work of teaching activities, offers suggestions for improvements. 3. Specialist, provides the teaching support in the professional fields, effectively guarantee the teaching quality. 4. Shaper, responsible for the inspection of the completion of teaching tasks and the supervision of team activities. 5. Implementer, completes the teaching tasks and normative practical work. 6. Completer-finisher, responsible for more complicated and fine work, and then continuously improve the teaching effect. 7. Coordinator, takes charge of the organization, leadership and coordination of the team, further improve the level of teaching management. 8. Team-worker, encourages the members to communicate and exchange more closer and improves the enthusiasm for participation. 9. Resource investigator, undertakes the external activities of the team and promotes team building effectively. These roles are used to identify team members' strengths and weaknesses in the work environment. In a high-performing teaching team, team members should be clear about the responsibilities and authorities of their roles, and the roles should be assigned according to their skills and behavioral strengths within a team. Therefore, it raises members' personal effectiveness and self-awareness. It also helps understand other members' values and build mutual trust in the team.

Table 1 Belbin's roles and behavior characteristics

Belbin's roles		Behavior characteristics
Cerebral roles	Plant	Creative, imaginative, unorthodox. Solves difficult problems. Can ignore incidentals. Too immersed to communicate.
	Monitor - Evaluator	Even tempered, strategic, discerning. Sees and evaluates correctly all options. Can lack drive and inspired leadership.
	Specialist	Provides specialist knowledge. Single-minded, self-starter. Little interest outside of niche. Dwells on technicalities.
Action oriented roles	Shaper	Energetic, thrives under pressure. Determined, overcomes problems. Easily provoked and ignores others' feelings.
	Implementer	Disciplined, reliable, efficient. Inflexible, slow to respond to new possibilities.
	Completer-finisher	Conscientious, detailed, wants to get the job done. Delivers on time Worries too much, hesitant to delegate.
People-oriented roles	Coordinator	Mature, confident leader. Clarifies goals, promotes decision-making. Delegates. Can be manipulative and controlling. May over delegate.
	Team-worker	Co-operative, relationship-focused, sensitive and diplomatic. A good listener, dislikes confrontation. Can be indecisive in a crisis.
	Resource investigator	Extrovert, enthusiastic, communicative. Explores opportunities and networks. Can be too optimistic and lose interest after initial enthusiasm.

### 3.5 Support from the organization

Last but not least, the support from college and universities can have a great influence on the development of a team. It is difficult to operate productively without the support from the college and universities. In order to build a high-performing teaching team, the college and universities should provide necessary help and opportunities for members in teaching resources, information, technical, team-building areas, etc.

## 4. Conclusion

A high-performing teaching team makes significant contributions to the success of the college and universities, though leading and developing a high-performing team is one of the most complicated tasks facing any team and leader in today's more vigorous competition environment. The suggestions aim at implementing the effectiveness and efficiency of teams. Cohesiveness, communication, and collaboration are the key factors that drive organizational success. Both team leaders and members should work to strengthen the sense of belonging, empathy and bonding, mutual trust and respect within a team, in order to ensure the sustainable and limitless development of the team.

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