Library of Team Leadership Roles

These roles can be adapted to use with either student or faculty teams.

Template for Role Description

The _____ role does _____ (describe big picture). They _____ (list additional big picture and specific responsibilities). When needed, they _____ (list other occasional roles). (Also provide some examples of specific types of group activities that this role helps the entire team fulfill).

As appropriate, describe what is done before, during, and after the team meeting.

Taking on the role of _____ can help you develop any of the leadership skills found in Project Leadership. It can be particularly helpful if you are interested in skill development of _____, _____, _____.

Contributor
A contributor is a member on the team who is actively engaged with the topic before the meeting and during the meeting. Before the meeting, they engage with the topic by thinking about a few questions or comments that would be relevant for the team. During the meeting, they contribute to the conversation in meaningful ways by listening, asking questions, and sharing relevant information. A particularly effective contributor will both be able to contribute their ideas and motivate others to add onto the discussion.

Taking on the role of contributor can help you develop any of the leadership skills found in Project Leadership. It can be particularly helpful if you are interested in skill development of being proactive, listening, and motivating.

Data Analyst
The Data Analyst works with the entire team to ensure that data is collectively stored and discussed. They discuss a shared approach of how to label resources and data. Resources include experimental reagents including fly stocks, fly crosses, and antibodies while data includes confocal images, ovary sizes, and observations. They ensure that the names of experimental samples and data files are recorded in a shared place and at the end of the day they provide updates to the team of where the files are located. If data collected from individuals needs to be shared by a certain time, the data analyst establishes a coordinated timeline for sharing the data. By communicating how resources and data have been labeled, organized, and recorded, the Data analyst ensures that the data can be retrieved and understood the next time that it is used.

During lab, they also direct conversations to help the team review and analyze their data. They promote a deeper interpretation of the data by asking each person for their perspectives. They ask questions such as: What does our data mean? How can we explain our results? Are there alternative explanations? Are there additional considerations that could strengthen or weaken our conclusion? Can someone further explain why we agree on this answer? Are there alternative explanations that we haven't considered yet? Can any parts of this experiment/result/explanation be further explained or clarified? How might deviations from the protocol affect the results?

As a Data Analyst, one can use the role as an opportunity to develop skills of being proactive, management and organization, as well as time management.

Discussion Facilitator
The facilitator provides the momentum, energy, and organization to the meeting. They work with the topic selector and the chair/principle investigator to develop a meeting agenda. They identify the tasks that need to be completed before the meeting, communicate a plan with the team, and lead the discussion during the meetings. Before the meeting, the facilitator identifies what resources the team needs to either prepare for the meeting or to have accessible during the meeting. During the meeting, the facilitator helps the discussion move forward, keeping it enjoyable and rewarding for all members. At the end of the meeting, the facilitator asks who would like to be the topic selector and facilitator for the next meeting.

When needed, the facilitator ensures that the group is focused and engaged. The facilitator may find it helpful to share an agenda or a plan of the tasks that will be completed when the team is together. When preparing and sharing the agenda, they may find it helpful to meet with the chair/principle investigator and topic selector to see if there are any parts of the agenda to clarify. Overall, the facilitator promotes a supportive, respectful environment that makes sure that each person is actively engaged in the conversation.

Taking on the role of Facilitator can help you develop any of the leadership skills found in Project Leadership. It can be particularly helpful if you are interested in further building skills of interpersonal communication skills, planning, organizing, and listening.

Facilitator
The facilitator conveys the big picture goals of the lab. They initiate developing a collaborative plan to complete the tasks and incorporate feedback to make sure the plan is feasible. They identify the tasks that need to be completed, communicate a plan, and incorporate different perspectives to complete the lab. The facilitator may find it helpful to share an agenda of what will be done in the lab or a summary of what was done. When preparing the agenda, they may find it helpful to ask everyone in the group if there is any aspect that needs to be focused on as a group or individually. During the lab, the facilitator helps the process move forward, keeping it enjoyable and rewarding for all members. When needed, the facilitator ensures that the group is focused and engaged. They make sure that there are ample opportunities for team discussion,

and questions, especially those prompted by the philosopher and data analyst. Overall, the facilitator promotes a supportive and respectful environment for each person to participate.

As a Facilitator, one can use the role as an opportunity to develop skills of teamwork, time management, as well as interpersonal communication.

Notetaker
The notetaker takes on a critical role of documenting discussions so that team members have a record of our progress and accountability towards our future goals. Before the meeting, the notetaker familiarizes themselves with the agenda. During the meeting, they share the notes page with the entire team and they actively take notes during the discussion. When resources are shared during the meeting, the notetaker includes these resources in the notes.
By writing notes that captivate both what was discussed and who discussed different ideas, our team is able to maintain a record of our work that we can continue to reference in the future.

Taking on the role of notetaker can help you develop any of the leadership skills found in Project Leadership. It can be particularly helpful if you are interested in skill development of listening, interpersonal communication, and organization.

Philosopher
The facilitator conveys the big picture goals of the lab. They initiate developing a collaborative plan to complete the tasks and incorporate feedback to make sure the plan is feasible. They identify the tasks that need to be completed, communicate a plan, and incorporate different perspectives to complete the lab. The facilitator may find it helpful to share an agenda of what will be done in the lab or a summary of what was done. When preparing the agenda, they may find it helpful to ask everyone in the group if there is any aspect that needs to be focused on as a group or individually. During the lab, the facilitator helps the process move forward, keeping it enjoyable and rewarding for all members. When needed, the facilitator ensures that the group is focused and engaged. They make sure that there are ample opportunities for team discussion, and questions, especially those prompted by the philosopher and data analyst. Overall, the facilitator promotes a supportive and respectful environment for each person to participate.

As a Facilitator, one can use the role as an opportunity to develop skills of teamwork, time management, as well as interpersonal communication.

Promoter
The promoter celebrates milestones and finds ways to make meetings and communication more fun. They keep track of accomplishments and acknowledge individual contributions. They look for ways to improve feelings of belonging among members. Before the meeting, they might help the Facilitator come up with icebreakers to make the meeting fun. They might help the group make a spotify playlist, find a location on campus to meet with comfortable chairs, and/or help members get to know each other.

Taking on the role of promoter can help you develop any of the leadership skills found in Project Leadership. It can be particularly helpful if you are interested in skill development of motivation and interpersonal communication.

Strategist I
The strategist pays particular attention to the function of the team so that the team meets their goals. They work closely with the Facilitator to ensure an efficient use of lab time and help make sure that each person is actively contributing to performing the experiments. After reviewing an agenda or summary from the Facilitator, they look if anything has been overlooked and suggest ways to make changes or add overlooked tasks. During lab, the strategist makes sure that each person is actively involved and may provide suggestions to engage everyone or to use lab time more effectively. They keep track of time and notify the facilitator when the agreed upon time for the next task is approaching. When obstacles arise, they work to identify, plan, and execute a solution. At the end of a lab session, they provide overall feedback sharing how the group worked collaboratively and suggestions of what the entire group may want to work on for future meetings. They provide a reflection answering questions such as: What worked well? What could be done differently? What worked effectively to complete lab tasks? What could be done to improve lab tasks?

As a Strategist, one can use the role as an opportunity to develop skills of time management and interpersonal communication skills.

Strategist II
The strategist helps ensure time efficiency and task completion. They make sure that tasks are distributed across the entire team. The strategist also helps make sure that agenda items are addressed in a timely manner and directs the team to move towards the next step as needed. In essence, they make sure that the group is moving to different parts of the discussion, reviewing questions, and asking questions.

They work closely with the Facilitator to ensure an efficient use of meeting time. After reviewing an agenda or summary from the Facilitator, they look if anything has been overlooked and suggest ways to make changes or add overlooked tasks. During the meeting, they keep track of time for various parts of the agenda and communicate with the facilitator when the agreed-upon time is nearly completed. At the end of the meeting, they provide overall feedback about how the meeting went and suggestions of what the group may want to work on for future meetings. What could be done differently? What worked effectively to complete agenda items? What worked to engage members in conversation? What could be done to enhance the meeting?

Taking on the role of Strategist can help you develop any of the leadership skills found in Project Leadership. It can be particularly helpful if you are interested in further building skills of interpersonal communication skills, time management, and listening.

Summarizer
The summarizer captures what was completed during the meeting by reviewing the agenda, the notes, and their unique perspectives. After identifying these events, they share an email summary of the events with all team members. By sharing a summary, the entire team can reflect on the past discussion and use the past discussion to inform future goals of the group. The summary is also a way to keep all members who may not have been able to attend the meeting. When sharing the summary, it is helpful to include a note that members should expect an email from the topic selector about the topic at the next meeting.

Taking on the role of summarizer can help you develop any of the leadership skills found in Project Leadership. It can be particularly helpful if you are interested in skill development of organization, motivation, and being proactive.

Time Manager
The time manager is a member of the team who focuses on enabling the team to complete their tasks during a meeting. An effective time manager will be good at observation skills and proactively provide resources for timely execution of team tasks. Before the meeting, the time manager reviews what tasks will need to be performed during the meeting. They also work with the facilitator before the meeting to review the agenda and predict how much time will be needed on the agenda to complete each task. During the meeting, the time manager communicates with the facilitator to make sure that the team is moving through the agenda in a timely manner.

To help the team be effective with their use of time, the time manager tries to identify barriers that may prevent the team from completing the task. The time manager may suggest a solution to overcome the barrier or suggest alternative ways to complete the team's tasks. For example, if the task is taking longer, but is necessary to complete, the time manager may recommend postponing other tasks. However, if the barriers require additional time to resolve, the time manager may recommend moving to the next task so that the barriers may be resolved after the meeting.

Taking the role of a time manager can help you develop time management, problem solving, as well as management and organizing skills.

Topic Selector
The topic selector chooses a topic related to the team's goals to take action, research, or discuss at the next meeting. The selection of the topic should be completed within three days of the previous meeting so that the topic selector, facilitator, and chair/principal investigator have sufficient time to prepare and inform the rest of the team.

In identifying potential topics, the Topic Selector may find it helpful to identify topics discussed, but not yet completed from previous meetings as well as elements that help team members implement Project Leadership in their institution. They may also find it helpful to talk with the chair/principle investigator to run through ideas. Approximately one week before the meeting,

the topic selector, facilitator, and chair/principal investigator meet to discuss the next week's agenda.

Taking on the role of topic selector can help you develop any of the leadership skills found in Project Leadership. It can be particularly helpful if you are interested in skill development of planning, organizing, and being proactive.