

Information Synthesis Goals and Strategies Guide

Main Goals: To ensure that the team does each of the following: (1) uses all members as a source for information and ideas when working on a task, (2) builds on shared information and ideas among members, and (3) makes an effort to ensure that members are fully understanding the information and ideas shared during team discussion.

Goal 1. Use all members as a source for information and ideas when working on a task

Objective 1.1: Get every member to participate equally.

Problem 1.1.1: Someone is contributing the majority of ideas to the conversation.

Strategy 1.1.1.1: Don't let one person's viewpoints drive team function. Try to encourage others to serve as resources of information for the team.

"That's a good point, Theo, but what do you think Chris?"

Strategy 1.1.1.2: Ask the major contributor to help get others to participate.

"Jack, you know a lot about computer security and risk, so perhaps you can push us to share our perspectives more so we can come up with a variety of positions on the topic."

Strategy 1.1.1.3: Use the major contributor as a resource for facilitation, error checking, and perspective finding.

"Chuck, you're pretty knowledgeable about software design, so it would be helpful if you could take a facilitating role on this one and help us make sure we work to come up with as many different design ideas as possible and then help us think about all the possible trade-offs."

"Barbara, you're good at coming up with ideas about this topic, so why don't you help come up with different perspectives? Our team will be more successful if we can make sure to integrate as many different perspectives as possible."

Strategy 1.1.1.4: Assign a team member to focus on information sharing and moderate discussions.

"Thanks for sharing so many ideas, Jack. Chris, what do you think about the ideas we've shared so far?"

"Yolanda, what's your take on the most difficult topic in this chapter?"

Strategy 1.1.1.5: Assign members to specialize in different but supplemental areas.

“Okay, so we need to develop a mental model for our design. Maybe I can brush up on mental models, Amy can look for some design ideas, and Jordan, you can focus on trying to argue against our combined ideas in order to look for alternatives. What do you think?”

Problem 1.1.2: Someone is rambling or digressing.

Strategy 1.1.2.1: Remind them that a goal of the discussion is to give only relevant information and ideas that are direct and to the point (concise).

“Dave, let’s get back to discussing trade-offs, we need to be mindful of our time constraints.”

“Matt, those are all good ideas, but I think we might be veering off topic. We don’t have much time and need to stay on point.”

Problem 1.1.3: Someone isn’t sharing ideas.

Strategy 1.1.3.1: Create an agenda, assign responsibilities or specializations, and take turns presenting during the discussion.

“Pat, you’re up. What did you find out?”

Strategy 1.1.3.2: Choose someone who hasn’t communicated in a while.

“Sasha since you haven’t commented yet, what do you think about...?”

Strategy 1.1.3.3: Find out why the person does not contribute as much during discussions and how you can help them contribute more.

“Sam, you’re always the quietest during discussions. It would help us if you could find ways to contribute more ideas. Why do you think you tend to contribute less and how can we help you to contribute more?”

Problem 1.1.3: A member is too busy to prepare for group discussions

Strategy 1.1.3.4: Come up with a plan to help them make better use of their time.

“Tamara, I know you are active duty next week, so maybe we can decide make you responsible for on a small part of the reading. Is there anything in next week’s readings that you would be particularly interested in?”

“Trevor, you have a busy week next week, right? Well, maybe you could focus on evaluating some of the claims made in the book about technology’s impact on

society and then during the meeting you can challenge us to support any claims we make with evidence from the book or other sources?” What do you think?

Goal 2. Make use of member contributions by collectively building on shared information.

Objective 2.1: Help to extend and add on to team member contributions

Problem 2.1.1: Members aren’t exploring each others’ ideas with sufficient depth.

Strategy 2.1.1.1: try to pull for additional details or support for someone’s contribution.

“So why did you say we should consider beauty of the design? ”

“Susan, you said that military personnel should not keep Facebook accounts for security reasons. Can you elaborate on that and tell us how that connects to the chapter?”

Strategy 2.1.1.2: Try to connect shared ideas to real-world examples.

“Susan’s comment about Facebook reminds me of an incident that occurred in my company. See it’s not just military, social networks can cause problems in business too. ”

Strategy 2.1.1.3 Ensure that **multiple** members add additional details or support to someone’s contribution.

Tamina: We could do claymation as part of our presentation. I know how to do it!

Todd: Tamina, I like your claymation idea, but we could also make sure that we add regular video so it would not take as long to make.

Tamina: Good point, Todd. Claymation is really time consuming.

Suzy: Yes, but really engaging for the audience, which is one of our goals. So we should definitely still add it, but how can we use both media and make a coherent presentation?

Tamina: Well, maybe we can just use the claymation for short examples of longer messages we make in the regular video.

Todd: Oh, like illustrations or roleplay.

Tamina: Exactly!”

Stanley: Joe said that emotional interaction is an important part of HCI, and I think this is connected to the psychology of emotion article we read by Don Norman.

Shin-I: Oh, yeah. He argues that beautiful things affect people’s perceptions of function.

Tim: That's right. Wait, is he the one that uses that example of the website

Stanley: Website?

Shin-I: That people are more likely to be more patient and forgiving of mistakes if it looks pretty."

Tim: Yup, I think he is and he says if something is not attractive then it may not matter how well it works, people still won't like using it.

Stanley: Do you think that is always the case though? Aren't certain contexts different?"

Problem 2.1.2: Introduced ideas are ignored

Strategy 2.1.2.1: Check previous chat messages to ensure ideas introduced by each member are adequately discussed before moving on to a different topic or question.

"Brenda, sorry I missed your earlier comment. What did you mean by the consequences of online behavior?"

Goal 3. Make an effort to ensure that members fully understand the information and ideas shared in team discussion

Objective 3.1: Ensure that people are accurately conceptualizing each other's contributions.

Problem 3.1.1: Members are not keeping track of collective ideas.

Strategy 3.1.1.1: Have members summarize important points.

"Luke, what do you think are the key points of that idea?"

"Sarah, how would you put that into your own words?"

"Okay, so thus far we have discussed the benefits of technology and how it has helped to improve quality of life. Mary talked about medicine, Amit talked about emergency crisis scenarios, and I brought up educational benefits. What about problems or negative impacts of technology though? I bet each of these areas we have mentioned could also have been negatively impacted by technology."

Strategy 3.1.1.2: Have members show that they are attending to each other's ideas by rephrasing or building on previous comments.

"I like what you said Kayla, I think we should [rephrase Kayla's statement]."

Strategy 3.1.1.3: Treat everyone's suggestions seriously.

"That's an interesting thought, though I'm not sure I agree with it. So let me make sure I understand your point, first. Are you arguing that we would be happier and healthier as a society without the internet?"

Problem 3.1.2: Members are not checking to make sure others truly understand points made

Strategy 3.1.1.2: Ask members directly if they understand the information or idea.

“Pat, does that make sense to you?”

“Sasha made an interesting point. Did everyone understand it?”

“Am I explaining that well? Let me try again with a different example.”

Strategy 3.1.2.2: Ensure that members ask questions when they don't understand.

“I'm not sure what you mean. Can you explain more?”

“John, do you need Mary to explain what she means?”

Strategy 3.1.2.3: Try to reword what someone else said to demonstrate your understanding of a shared idea.

“Do you mean ...?”

“So when you say our previous experiences influence how we make sense of things, are you referring to the mental models theories we read in the chapter?”