

A woman with dark curly hair and glasses, wearing a black and white striped long-sleeved shirt, is smiling while working on a laptop. She is sitting at a dark desk in a bright office with large windows in the background. The scene is partially overlaid by a blue graphic element on the left side.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

Project management

Project management



Strategies to share with students

Suggested ideas and practices educators can share with students to support awareness of the topic and development of the skill. Strategies can be adopted/adapted as needed.

- See yourself as a project manager and identify your management style.**
 - Think of various examples of projects you have managed or are currently managing
 - Academic projects (e.g., a team assignment in class)
 - Professional projects (e.g., organizing a volunteer event)
 - Personal projects (e.g., planning a wedding)
 - Identify the essential elements of time, cost, and scope in each project to develop a conscious awareness of your project management style and how you approach these three elements in different situations.
- Seek opportunities to engage with project management** and recognize that this is a skill that can be developed over time. Identify the skills related to project management (e.g., leadership, prioritization giving/receiving feedback) and actively develop them to get better at project management.
- Explore using project management tools such as a work breakdown structure (WBS).** This is a step-by-step approach that incorporates scope, cost, and constraints to complete large projects. A WBS is a graphical representation of the needs of a project. It includes multiple levels that can be organized by the life cycle stage of the project. There are various online tools and programs that can be used to implement a WBS.
- Explore the Project Management Institute (PMI®),** for increased knowledge on PMBOK® (Project Management Body of Knowledge), the global industry standard in project management methodologies.



Project management



Tips for course design and delivery

Ways educators can bring awareness of the topic and incorporate development of the skill into post-secondary course design and delivery.



When assigning teamwork, encourage students to appoint a person to the role of project manager.

- When rotating between activities, ensure that every student assumes the role of project manager at least once.
- Debrief after team activities on the role of project manager.
 - Did students enjoy assuming this role? If so, why? If not, why not?
 - Did students feel that their peers interacted with them differently because of this role? If so, in which ways and how did that impact them?
 - Did students feel more stress or less stress (positive or negative impact on their mental health) due to assuming this role?



Create assignments that make use of the project management life cycle to structure longer term assignments (such as thesis work):

- Initiating (getting started)
- Planning (building the infrastructure)
- Executing (doing the work)
- Monitoring/Controlling (keeping an eye on progress)
- Closing (lessons learned and signing off)



Project management



Tips for course design and delivery

Ways educators can bring awareness of the topic and incorporate development of the skill into post-secondary course design and delivery.

- ☑ **Create assignments that make use of project management methodologies (outlined in PMBOK®) by promoting students to structure their activities in terms of “knowledge areas.”**

Ensure students understand the difference between each knowledge area.

- Scope management
- Quality management
- Resource management
- Time management
- Cost management
- Risk management
- Communication management
- Stakeholder management

- ☑ **Incorporate a project charter into a large academic body of work** (such as a thesis or group assignment) or other academic projects, to address the key components of work identification and planning. A project plan could then follow, enabling more detailed day-to-day project tracking and control. The project charter and project plan are the main tools required to enable risk management and proactive problem solving. In an academic setting, instructors are invited to encourage students to frame their work as projects.



Project management



Activities to do with students

Downloadable activities with suggested guidelines that educators can do with students. Activities can be adopted/adapted as needed.

Activity: Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

Overview

Work Breakdown Structure is a tool that arranges the tasks of a project into manageable pieces. Identify a course assessment where students would benefit from creating a work breakdown structure (WBS). Students can use the template provided or create their own WBS to support the course assessment. This activity allows students to practice creating a WBS to accomplish their assignment goals.

Review the [Educator Activity Guide](#) before getting started with this activity.

Time

- Under 20 minutes
- 20 minutes to 1 hour
- More than 1 hour
- Over several classes

Modality

- In person
- Online synchronous
- Online asynchronous

Format

- Individual
- In pairs
- Small groups
- Large groups
- Whole class

Resources

- Module notes
- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Laptop/tablet
- WBS examples/templates



Project management

Instructions

1. Introduce the concept of a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) as a tool students can use when completing assignments. Refer to the module notes (www.hiddencurriculum.ca) as needed.
2. Find WBS examples or share your own examples with students and discuss how the work was broken down.
3. Embed the completion of a WBS into an upcoming assignment or task. This can be individual or team.
4. Ask students to select a tool to use (e.g., online software, Excel document, an organizer they create) to organize their WBS for their project.
5. Have students to define the major steps of the assignment and break down each major step into smaller steps. Remind students to factor in the goals, resources needed, and due dates of the assignment.
6. Optional: Once students have completed their WBS, have them exchange it with another peer or group. Ask the students to provide feedback and suggest any revisions before handing them back. Have students read/consider the feedback shared with them and make appropriate changes.
7. Follow up by having students reflect individually on how they can apply a WBS to other tasks in their academic or personal

Variation(s)

- Have students create a plan for reviewing and monitoring their WBS throughout their project.
- Ask students to consider comparing and contrasting a WBS with other resources they likely have worked with to meet their deadlines (e.g., drafts, outlines, agendas, prioritization tools, project charters etc.).



Project management



Activities to do with students

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Activity: Am I a Project Manager?

Overview

These reflection prompts help students to shape their understanding of project management and what this skill entails. In answering these questions, students can see themselves as project managers and develop the confidence to lead activities in their personal, academic, and professional lives.

Review the [Educator Activity Guide](#) before getting started with this activity.

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Resources

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- Pen/pencil
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Project management

Instructions

1. Engage students in a discussion about project management by asking them to define a project and project manager. Encourage them to Google these terms if needed.
 - Refer to the module notes (www.hiddencurriculum.ca) as needed in preparation for this activity.
2. Ask students to reflect on why project management would be an important skill for students to develop.
3. Have students form small groups and ask the groups to think about and discuss the following prompts/questions:
 - The ability of a person to manage a project effectively depends on what?
 - Which personal qualities would make someone a good project manager?
 - What skills does a project manager need?
4. Invite students to share their responses and engage the class in a discussion. Where possible, push student thinking by having them make connections with past projects, projects they are currently working on, and future projects they envision for themselves (academic, work, personal, etc.).
5. Encourage students to read the Project Management Strategies PDF and reflect on how they can apply the work, qualities, and skills of project management to their personal and academic projects.

Variation(s)

- Together with students, create your own definition of project management and define the role of project manager as it relates to educational contexts.



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Activities to do with students

Downloadable activities with suggested guidelines that educators can do with students. Activities can be adopted/adapted as needed.

Activity: Project Manager Job Description

Overview

Students locate and research various job postings for project managers and use word clouds to identify common qualities, skills, and experiences that are sought. Students write interview questions they would ask candidates for these jobs and indicate the criteria they are looking for in their responses. This activity works to equip students with a real-world understanding of project management.

Review the [Educator Activity Guide](#) before getting started with this activity.

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Resources

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- Pen/pencil
- Laptop/tablet
- Project manager job postings



Project management

Instructions

Note: This activity will work best after having completed the activity *Am I a Project Manager* or after a discussion about project management and what it entails.

1. Have students form small groups.
2. Ask students to do a search for project manager job postings. They should find and read several examples across different sectors.
3. Ask students to identify which aspects of these job descriptions are repeated throughout the examples and create a list of relevant key words.
4. *Optional:* Invite students to create word clouds (using free online generators) to visualize the key words common to project managers. They can also compare and contrast their word clouds before proceeding to the next step.
5. Ask students to use these key words and the ideas they gained from comparing job postings to develop a list of top qualities and skills that employers look for, generally, in project managers.
6. Tell students to select one of the job postings and imagine themselves as the hiring committee. In this role, they need to develop 6 to 8 interview questions (with responses) that reflect the qualities, skills, and competencies a project manager would need to perform this position well.
7. Invite students to share their job posting, interview questions, and ideal interview answers in a class discussion.

Variation(s)

- Simulate a mock interview based on the questions the groups identified. Some of the students can assess the responses and determine why they would/wouldn't hire this candidate.

