

Getting started with communication in RSS

Lab briefings, technical communication, and team skills

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Characteristics of technical communication

- Contains specific, substantive information
- Has a purpose
- Has an audience: usually more than one reader/listener
 - Knowing that audience is important
- Uses formats or types of communication specific to your discipline or workplace
- Uses graphics and visual organization
- Often written or presented collaboratively
- Influenced by the context of the audience and of the writer or speaker
- Ethical

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Purpose of lab briefings in RSS

- Keep team on track for success with robot knowledge for project
- Demonstrate understanding of lab work to the professors
- Opportunity to ask questions and get answers
- Professional practice
 - you will brief many times in your professional life

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Criteria for successful briefings

- Prepare
 - Engineers go to meetings with a purpose. They prepare to achieve that purpose.
- Focus
 - Briefings are usually focused on status of recent work.
- Summarize tasks accomplished.
 - Provide some evidence or analysis or data.
 - Use graphics intelligently to show information.

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Criteria for briefings con't. .

- Present problems to be solved or questions to be answered.
- Maintain a constructive attitude.
 - Be open. Don't be defensive.
 - Questions often are an important learning opportunity.
 - Questions or problems lead to "next steps" or "work to be done."

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The rubric for an RSS briefing

- Does the briefing have a short introduction that introduces team members and tells the listeners about the objective of the lab.
- Is the briefing organized?
- Do the presenters stay within the 15 minute time constraint?
- Does the team summarize the work they have done, demonstrating their understanding?

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RSS lab briefing rubric

- Does the team use technical graphics appropriately and also explain those graphics?
- Does the team present problems to be solved and offer possible solutions?
- Do all members of the team share in the briefing?

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Please. . . for better briefings

- Put slide numbers on your slides. This helps us comment.
- Bring a PPT print out so that you have an idea of what your faculty is seeing.
- Use informative graphics.
 - No humorous or decorative ones
 - Make font and font size easily readable.

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- Team lab briefings and individual PAR (next week) build communication skills and also collaborative skills.
- Those skills roll forward to the team proposal and design reviews and ultimately to the Challenge briefing and the Challenge demonstration.

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Teamwork: task and process

Task: WHAT
you want to do

Process: HOW you plan to do the task.

Project management; communication; work breakdown; task assignment; interpersonal skills; decision-making; conflict resolution; team assessment

Back up slides

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Project management skills

- Task identification
- Work division
 - Work convergence
- Time estimation, planning and scheduling
- Communication between teammates
 - Meetings
- Documentation

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Decision-making

- Decision-making styles
 - Consensus?
 - Forcing others to go along with your choice?
 - Based on evidence?
 - The majority rules?
 - Letting one person--the “expert”-- decide?
 - NOT making a decision?

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Conflict management

- Ignoring it and hoping it will go away?
- Becoming confrontational?
- Being passive-aggressive?
- Putting the success of the project first and working toward compromise?
- Seeking support from mentors and faculty?

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Interpersonal skills

- Listening actively.
- Learning something about your peers as people. Develop a relationship
- Being respectful of the ideas and work of others.
 - In speech, in behavior and whether they are present or not
- Being honest and responsible and reliable.

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