Typical Group Roles

- **Discussion Leader.** The **discussion leader** works to keep the group on track. He or she is charged with ensuring full participation from all team members, and helps to moderate individuals who may try to dominate the group discussion. Typical comments from the discussion leader may include the following:
    - "Let's focus on the problem."
    - "Should we move on the next question?"
    - "John, what do you think about this issue?"

- **Recorder/Record Keeper.** The **recorder** keeps track of unresolved issues, records group strategies, maintains archives of all work sheets and electronic files, and convenes the group outside of class as necessary. You'll frequently hear the recorder say things like this:
    - "Did we get all of the learning issues down?"
    - "Is this the diagram we want to use?"
    - "I have a copy of our files. I also posted them to our File Exchange section in Blackboard. That way, everyone in the group will have access to the files we created today."

- **Reporter** . The **reporter** assembles the draft of the group's solution for the project, solicits feedback from all group members, incorporates agreed-upon changes, and submits the project. The reporter is often heard uttering these phrases:
    - "Is everyone in agreement with this document?"
    - "Everyone needs to review this draft and get back to me with comments before Wednesday."

- **Accuracy Coach.** The **accuracy coach** probes for group understanding and makes sure that all team members are familiar with all aspects of the project. He or she locates valid, legitimate resources, and brings them to class if necessary. The accuracy coach may also review the entire project for accuracy and completeness, although all team members typically have some responsibility for that activity. You'll probably hear the accuracy coach say things like this:
    - "Where did you find that information?"
    - "Are we all clear about the underlying logic behind this formula?"
    - "Does the text have information we might be able to use as we prepare our response to this problem?"
    - "Is this calculation correct?"
    - "Did we investigate all of the learning issues on our list?"

- **Skeptic.** The **skeptic** challenges group consensus, and poses alternative solutions or different ways to think about the problem. The skeptic may make these kinds of comments:
    - "I'm not sure we're on the right track."
    - "Should we consider other ideas?"
    - "Are we sure this is the only way to look at this issue?"
    - "What if the underlying conditions change? Will our solution still work, or should we look at ways to make our solution more flexible?"

- **Timekeeper.** The **timekeeper** makes sure the group stays on schedule – for the current group meeting and for the project as a whole. You'll hear the timekeeper say things like this:
    - "We only have ten minutes left in this class period. Are we ready to write our meeting summary for today?"
    - "The project is due in four days. We should have our final draft ready by noon tomorrow. That way, everyone can review it and we'll have time to incorporate changes before we turn it in."

- **Reflector/Summarizer** . Reflection is a very important part of the PBL process. When you take the time to reflect on what you've done, you tend to come up with ways to improve how your group operates from class to class and from project to project. When group operations improve, the quality of the final project submissions tends to improve as well. The **reflector/summarizer** spearheads the reflection process. He or she summarizes the progress of the group at various stages of the project. This helps ensure that all team members are on the "same page," and provides a vehicle through which team members can make recommendations for improvements. The reflector/summarizer also works with the **accuracy coach** to check for group understanding. The reflector/summarizer tends to make comments like this:
    - "Here's where I think we are right now. Joe, what do you think?"
    - "Maria, you mentioned that we need to come up with a better review process for our final draft than the process we followed on the last project. We should discuss this as a team before we get too far along in this next project."
    - "Wow – I can't believe this class period is almost over! Let's talk about what we accomplished today."
    - "We're at the mid-point of our project. Here's what we've finished so far. Sue, does this agree with your records of our progress to date?"

[†] Adapted from Allen, D. A., Duch, B.J., and Groh, S. E. (2001). Strategies for using groups. In B.J. Duch, S.E. Groh, & D.E. Allen (Eds.), *The Power of Problem-Based Learning* (pp. 59-68). Sterling , VA : Stylus Publishing and Watson, George H. Silicon, Circuits, and the Digital Revolution (SCEN 103). 11-Feb-2000 . Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Delaware . Retrieved 31-May-2005.
<http://www.physics.udel.edu/~watson/scen103/colloq2000/question1.html>.