Team-Based Learning Framework (TBL+) with SW-2570-002 Introduction to Social Work: Student Reflections Analysis Report

An analysis of 18 student reflections on their experiences working in semester-long teams in the Introduction to Social Work course revealed clear patterns in perceived benefits and areas for growth. This report is derived from the students' responses to the last question of their Final Exam:

Reflect upon your experiences working as part of a team throughout the semester during in-class assignments, assigned discussion board (DB) presentations, and other collaborative projects. In your response, address the following:

- Describe your overall role(s) and experience working within a team setting during this course.
- Create a list of at least three important lessons you learned about effective teamwork, communication, leadership, **OR** collaboration.
- Identify the aspects of teamwork that you found to be the most rewarding and explain why.
- Identify the aspects of teamwork that you found to be the most challenging and explain how you attempted to address or overcome these challenges.
- Reflect on how your experience working in a team this semester connects directly to professional expectations and competencies in social work practice, particularly in micro, mezzo, and macro settings.

Themes were consolidated into 10 categories and color-coded as Positive, Improvement, or Neutral. Two visual representations—a chart reflecting the number of students whose themes fell within those grouped categories, and a stacked bar chart to provide a better overall view of the results. All of which is used to highlight student sentiments across each theme. In addition, this report correlates the positive outcomes represented in their responses to the CSWE Competencies, followed by a sampling of the students' own words on how the TBL+ approach impacted both their academic career path and their personal journeys.

| Category	Type	Number of Students
Other	Neutral	14
Personal Growth & Development	Positive	10
Collaboration & Role Clarity	Positive	9
Communication	Positive	6
Team Cohesion & Belonging	Positive	6
Time & Task Management	Positive	6
Leadership & Delegation	Positive	5
Professional Practice Application	Positive	4
Diversity & Perspective-Taking	Positive	3
Time & Task Management	Improvement	3
Interpersonal & Emotional Barriers	Improvement	2
Communication	Improvement	1
Leadership & Delegation	Improvement	1

(Table 1)

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Top Positive Themes included:

- Personal Growth & Development (e.g., increased confidence, self-awareness)

- Collaboration & Role Clarity (e.g., delegation, shared responsibility)

- Team Cohesion & Belonging (e.g., friendship, emotional support)

Primary Areas for Improvement:

- Communication (especially inconsistent messaging)

- Time & Task Management (notably scheduling conflicts and workload balance)

- Interpersonal Barriers (such as anxiety, public speaking fears, and language challenges)

These reflections not only reveal how students learned from working in diverse team environments but also demonstrate critical alignment with professional social work competencies, particularly the ability to work across micro, mezzo, and macro practice levels.

Student Reflections by Theme Type
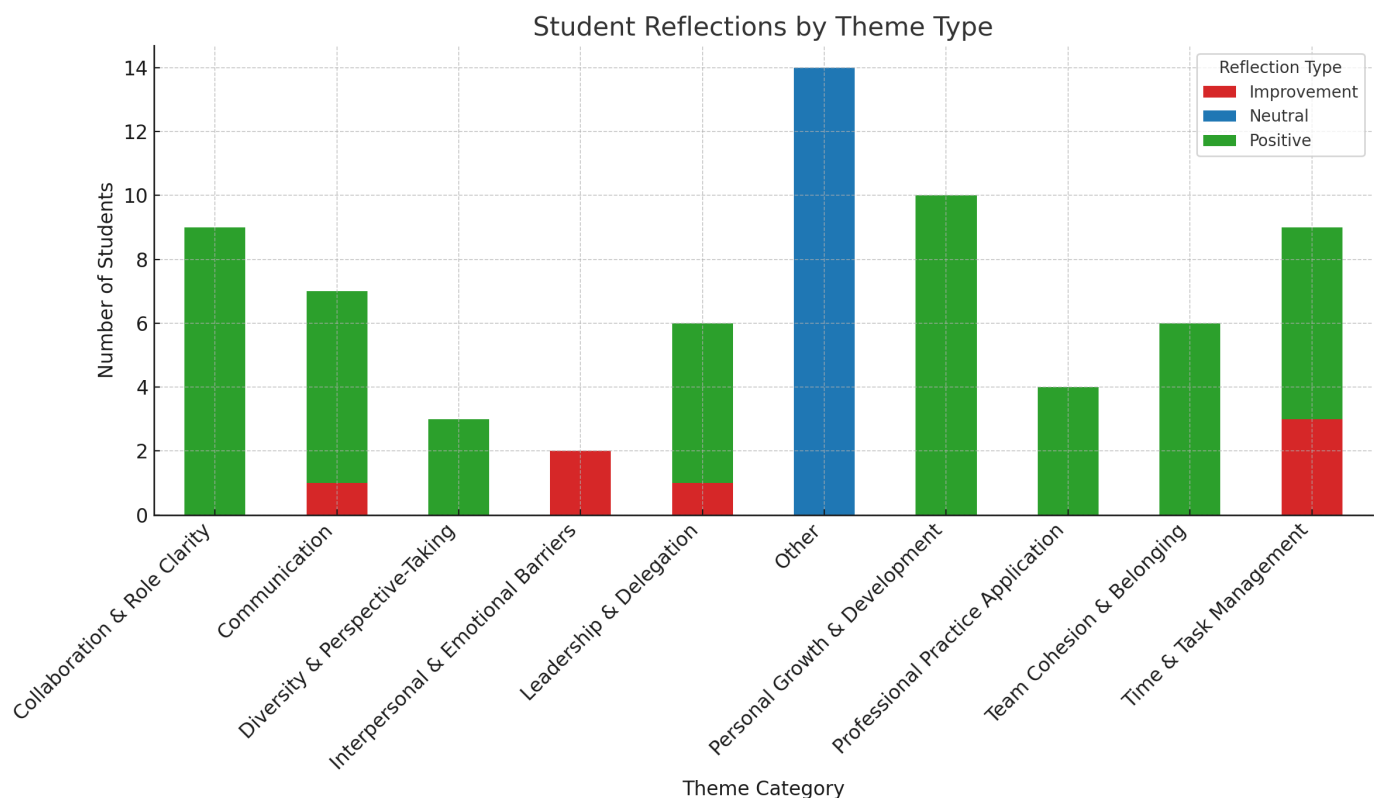
(Graph 1)

Alignment with CSWE Competencies

6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Estimated Influence from Team Experience: 90%

Aligned Categories: Team Cohesion & Belonging, Personal Growth & Development, Leadership & Delegation

Students reported increased confidence, team bonding, and collaboration across differences, echoing real-world group engagement. However, discomfort with confrontation and inconsistent communication limited full engagement for some.

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
Estimated Influence from Team Experience: 85%

Aligned Categories: Collaboration & Role Clarity, Leadership & Delegation, Communication, Time & Task Management

Students practiced ethical responsibility through shared roles, respectful engagement, and communication, but inconsistent participation and time management issues suggest room for professional accountability growth.

8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Estimated Influence from Team Experience: 80%

Aligned Categories: Leadership & Delegation, Team Cohesion & Belonging, Professional Practice Application

Team interventions (e.g., yard sign campaigns) required coordination, role distribution, and follow-through, simulating social work intervention steps. Barriers in follow-through or leadership gaps reflected areas for growth.

3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
Estimated Influence from Team Experience: 75%

Aligned Categories: Diversity & Perspective-Taking, Team Cohesion & Belonging

Team dynamics fostered appreciation for differences, allowing students to connect across backgrounds. However, a few students struggled with cultural humility and adapting to varying communication styles.

9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Estimated Influence from Team Experience: 70%

Aligned Categories: Personal Growth & Development, Reflection, Communication

Many students demonstrated self-awareness and reflection, especially in acknowledging their growth and team contributions. The course allowed for introductory evaluation practice but lacked structured evaluative frameworks.

7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Estimated Influence from Team Experience: 65%

Aligned Categories: Collaboration & Role Clarity, Communication, Professional Practice Application

Team presentations and campaign planning required informal assessments and role alignment. Students demonstrated observation and group-based assessment skills but did not deeply reflect on assessment outcomes.

3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
Estimated Influence from Team Experience: 60%

Aligned Categories: Professional Practice Application, Diversity & Perspective-Taking

Campaign-based teamwork (e.g., DVSA projects) demonstrated application of advocacy at mezzo/macro levels. Still, more intentional integration of social justice conversations into teamwork would strengthen this link.

5. Engage in Policy Practice
Estimated Influence from Team Experience: 55%

Aligned Categories: Professional Practice Application

Some students directly engaged in policy-like thinking during campaigns (e.g., contacting officials, planning advocacy). These moments show promise, though more structured policy analysis would deepen this competency.

4. Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
Estimated Influence from Team Experience: 50%

Aligned Categories: Collaboration & Role Clarity, Time & Task Management

While not explicitly research-focused, students used teamwork strategies like task delegation and structured planning—core elements of collaborative inquiry. Greater emphasis on evidence-based decisions would reinforce this competency.

Top Student Quotes Linking TBL+ to Social Work Practice

Student 6: "It is such a good start and eye opener to how our careers will be in social work, because as social workers, you will be dealing with many different groups and individuals."

Student 8: "Working in the team definitely provided the experience of social work practice on many levels... On the micro level, we worked with each other professionally in teams, while on the mezzo level, we organized within the classroom and created a whole campaign."

Student 10: "Working in a team can connect to professional expectations and competencies in micro, mezzo, and macro settings because in each of these levels, social workers are working with others and are needed to work in a team."

Student 15: "Treating everyone with dignity and worth is always going to be a key feature in how I go about my career and life."

Student 16: "Working in a team this semester connects to professional expectations of social workers because many social workers also work in a team, and this exposed me to the nature of the field early on."

Student 17: "These, sometimes frustrating, teams were very good practice for that, as social work is not a solitary profession."

Student 4: "This semester connects directly to professional expectations and competencies in social work practice, particularly in micro, mezzo, and macro settings by learning how to communicate and getting in touch with whoever is the governor or building owner of said project or campaign."

Top Student Quotes Linking TBL+ to their Personal Growth

Student 3: "If I had the choice, all classes would be structured this way."

Student 6: "It is such a good start and eye opener to how our careers will be in social work, because as social workers, you will be dealing with many different groups and individuals."

Student 17: "I particularly loved the discussion board presentations as I find presenting incredibly difficult, my team was very helpful and supportive in those high anxiety moments."

Student 7: "If I were never put in this group, I don't believe I would have found the group of people who supported me when I couldn't support myself some days."

Student 15: "Although I faced many challenges this semester, I did the damn thing and I showed up… people are not always going to meet expectations, but you have to meet deadlines and get shit done anyways."

Student 8: "The most rewarding part of working with a team was simply knowing that you were all in it together."

Student 9: "To be honest, the team presentation unlocked some sort of fear and helped me to believe in myself; The fear of public speaking is something that almost all language learners face."

Student 1: "I decided to take the role as co-captain since I rarely take leadership roles. I felt that it was a great way to get out of my comfort zone."

Student 2: "Working with people isn't always my go-to, but my group was a set of like-minded individuals who were as committed as I was to doing good work."

Student 18: "I love being able to see someone have potential and encourage them when they knock it out of the park like my team did."