The Nature of Small Groups & Problem Solving Groups

Chapters 8 & 9
What is a Group
- Interaction/Interdependence
- Time
- Size
- Goals

Group Goals
- Individual goals
  - Task
  - Social
- Group goals
- When does the conflict arise??????

Types of Groups
- Learning groups
- Growth groups
- Problem-solving groups
- Social groups
Characteristics of Groups
- Rules
- Norms

Group Member Roles
- Formal Roles
- Functional Roles
  - Task
  - Social
  - Dysfunctional

SYNERGY
When to use Groups and Their Advantages

Dewey’s Problem Solving Approach
- Define & Analyze the problem
- Establish criteria
- Identify possible solutions
- Evaluate solutions
- Select best solutions
- Implement
- Evaluate/Follow up/Test

Decision Making Methods
- Authority Rule
- Majority Control
- Expert Opinion
- Minority Control
- Consensus
Cultural Influences on Group Communication
- Power Distance
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Task/Social orientation
- Short/Long term orientation

Theoretical Approaches to Effective Leadership
- Traits Analysis
- Leadership Style
  - Authoritarian
  - Democratic
  - Laissez-faire
  - Situational Leadership

Leadership Styles
- Laissez-faire
- Democratic
- Authoritarian
- Situational
POWER

- Defined:
  - Legitimate
  - Coercive
  - Reward
  - Expert
  - Information
  - Referent
Small Group Assignment & Presentation

Overview: This assignment consists of two parts. For part I each group will be assigned a problem to address and solve using John Dewey’s “Steps to Reflective Thinking.” For part II, each group will present their problem, a summarized version of the process they followed and their results.

Objectives: This assignment will give you first hand experience at problem solving within a group. You will also develop your individual group participation skills. The third part will introduce you to the difference between individual presentations and group presentations. The final part of this assignment will provide you individualized feedback from your group members regarding your participation within the group.

Guidelines:

Individual homework assignment:
- Review your group’s assigned topic. (See attached sheet.)
- Brainstorm on what the problem consists of and possible solutions. Apply steps 1-3 to your topic. Be prepared to discuss it with your group. Turn in a 1 page typed summary of your steps 1-3 on: (e-mail for date). Make 2 copies. One for me and one for you. You will then get with your group, discuss everyone’s work and come up with one group solution.

Presentation Assignment due on (see syllabus):
- As a group apply the first five steps of Dewey’s “Steps to Problem Solving” as discussed in class to your topic.
- The group will then present your problem and solution. The group may present the information any way they deem appropriate, in a formal presentation or in a creative interesting way. Do not just get up in front of the class and read your outline!!!! All group members must equally participate in the presentation. The presentation must address the first five steps, although some of the steps may be summarized and combined for the sake of time. The group has approximately 15 minutes for the presentation.
- Submit one typed outline of the group’s presentation. Use complete sentences in the outline and one style throughout the outline. The outline should include who is presenting what parts of the presentation. If using power point, submit a copy of the slides as well.
- A visual aid is required for the presentation. It may accompany any stage of the process.
- Some class time will be allowed for preparation, however, outside communication between the group may be necessary.
- Outside research (interviews, library research, internet, etc.) may be necessary in order to gain a more thorough understanding of the problem. No bibliography is required.
- As individuals, follow the “guidelines for responsibilities of group members” on the peer evaluation form as you work within the group. Your team members will evaluate your participation and contributions to the group. If you are unable to attend a group meeting you are required to submit to the group a summary of your thoughts and opinions in time for the meeting. If you fail to work with your group, do not attend group meetings, nor return phone calls/e-mails you will not be allowed to participate with your group on presentation day and will receive a ZERO for your grade!

Grade:
- Your “small group” grade will be a combination of the group presentation and outline grade and your individual contribution grade. Your peer evaluations contribute to your individual presentation grade. Thus, if your peers report that you didn't contribute to any of the meetings then your individual grade will be lowered accordingly. Completion of the peer evaluation forms is required and counts as part of your individual grade.
**Small Group Presentation Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Members Names: _____________________</th>
<th>Topic: ______________________</th>
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**Group Problem Analysis:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Defined &amp; Analyze the problem:</th>
<th>Instructor Comments for Group:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Define the problem</td>
<td>♦</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Open-ended question</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2. Defined key terms</td>
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<td>B. Analyzed the problem:</td>
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<td>1. Duration</td>
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<td>2. Causes</td>
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<td>3. Effects</td>
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<td>II. Established criteria</td>
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<td>a. Practical</td>
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<td>b. Value</td>
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<td>III. Identified possible solutions</td>
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<td>IV. Evaluation of possible solutions</td>
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<td>V. Selected final solution</td>
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**Group Presentation:**

| I. Covered all required parts. |                               |
| II. Group presentation flowed well. |                             |
| III. Planned the introduction and conclusion of the presentation. |   |
| IV. Group demonstrated enthusiasm. |                           |
| Supported each other throughout presentation. |   |
| V. Included visual aid. |                               |

**Group Presentation & Outline Grade (80%):**

(The written outline weighs heavily)
- Outline is in correct format.
- Outline is in complete sentences.
- Identifies assigned roles.
- Outline covers all required steps.
- Outline content shows thoughts and professionalism.

**Individual presentation grade (20%):**

- Speaker appeared prepared and knowledgeable of topic.
- Speaker discussed issues and did not read to audience.
- Includes feedback from peers
- Includes timely completion of peer evaluations

**FINAL INDIVIDUAL GRADE:**
Small Group Problem Solving Groups and Topics

1. Classroom interruptions (arriving late, pages/phones, etc)
2. Student body involvement in recycling on campus
3. Student use of the campus support center
4. Reduction of dropout rate at ACC
5. Involvement in ACC’s student life program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
<th>Group 4</th>
<th>Group 5</th>
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Group Member Peer Evaluation Form

Person being evaluated: _______________________________________________________________

Your name: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Using the following scale, rate the group member listed above:

5 = Excellent    4 = Good     3 = Average    2 = Fair     1 = Poor

_____ Informed the group.
   • Contributed current knowledge
   • Gathered additional relevant information

_____ Advocated personal beliefs
   • Stated and defended his/her opinions.
   • Open to changing own opinion as the discussion progressed.

_____ Questioned other participants.
   • Sought out additional information by asking appropriate questions.
   • Asked for clarification of ideas.
   • Encouraged others to explain, defend, and extend their ideas.

_____ Evaluated ideas and proposals.
   • Contributed to the analysis of proposed ideas.
   • Evaluated and tested his/her own ideas.

_____ Supported and monitored other group members.
   • Encouraged openness and acceptance of other members.
   • Avoided negative roles such as “the blocker,” “the attacker,” “the recognition seeker,” “the joker,” and “the withdrawer.”

_____ Presentation
   • Presented material as agreed upon by group.
   • Contributed to the cohesiveness of the group presentation.

_____ Attended group meetings and/or participated in phone calls/e-mails in order to meet the group’s goals.

_____ Overall rating I would give this member

_____ TOTAL POINTS GIVEN (add them all up).

Comments: (Strengths/weaknesses; contributions; and/or roles played by the individual)
MUST COMPLETE!
Small Group Presentation
Self-Evaluation

DIRECTIONS: Read scales for each of the statements given. Circle the number on the scale that most closely indicates your assessment of the group, and your participation in the group.

How did the group members work together, overall?
1 2 3 4 5
Very poorly Moderately well Very cooperatively

What was the extent of your involvement in group activities?
1 2 3 4 5
Not involved Moderately involved Very involved

Were you able to have your ideas and opinions listened to by others?
1 2 3 4 5
None considered Some ideas considered Everything I said was considered

How do you rank this group in terms of synergy?
1 2 3 4 5
No synergy Moderate synergy High level of synergy

How effectively did this group go about performing its assigned task?
1 2 3 4 5
Very ineffective Moderately effective Very effective

How much satisfaction did you derive from being a member of this group?
1 2 3 4 5
Very dissatisfied Some satisfaction Very satisfied

To what extent were task roles & social/maintenance roles fulfilled?
1 2 3 4 5
Most roles were not fulfilled Some roles were fulfilled All roles were fulfilled

***Must complete***
Now that the group has completed its assignment, what would you do differently to improve your contribution and overall satisfaction from participating in this activity?

Name: ______________________________________