Managing Groups in the Classroom
A Learn@Lunch Workshop
September 28, 2018
11:30-1:00

Workshop Presenters: Robert L. Duran & Lynne Kelly

Workshop Agenda

I. Introduction

    A. What you do currently with student groups

    B. Objectives of the workshop

II. What to Teach Students about Groups

III. Logistical Issues in Using Groups

    A. Forming Groups

    B. Evaluating Groups

    C. Assigning Tasks

IV. Typical Group Obstacles & How to Overcome Them

    A. Communication Obstacles

    B. Leadership Obstacles

    C. Member Responsibility Obstacles

    D. Mismanagement of Conflict

What to Teach

Definition of Small Group Communication:

"Communication among a small group of people who share a common purpose or goal, who feel a sense of belonging to the group, and who exert influence on one another" (Beebe & Masterson, 2015, p. 3).

Key components:

- Interaction between 3 – 12 people,
- Share a common purpose,
- Feel a sense of belonging,
- Exert influence on one another.
- A system comprised of interdependent members.

Group dynamics consist of two dimensions of behaviors:

- Instrumental (task) behaviors
- Socio-emotional behaviors

CMM 222 Small Group Formation Handout

Name_____ Cell phone_____

E-mail_____Major_____

Residence: On-campus_____ Off-campus_____

Directions: Please check **all of the times when you could be available to meet with your group. If you are free for most of a time block, but not all of it, check it anyway.** This does not mean you would have to meet with your group during all of those times. I am simply trying to form groups based on available free time. **If you can only check off a couple of times, you may want to take the course at another time.** Meeting with a group outside of class is a major component of this course.

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
8:30-10:00 am							
10:00-11:30 am							
11:30-12:30 am							
12:30-1:30 pm							
1:30-3:00 pm							
3:00-4:30 pm							
4:30-5:30 pm							
5:30-7:00 pm							
7:00-8:30 pm							
8:30-10:00 pm							

Comments?

1. My three strongest skill areas are: (rank them 1, 2, 3)

_____ writing
_____ research
_____ public speaking
_____ video production
_____ photography
_____ PowerPoint
_____ computer skills
_____ math/quantitative reasoning
_____ organization
_____ other _____

2. How important are your grades to you? (check one)

_____ extremely important
_____ important
_____ of some concern
_____ unimportant
_____ extremely unimportant
_____ other_____

3. How important to you is the grade you earn in this course (CMM 222)? (check one)

_____ extremely important
_____ important
_____ of some concern
_____ unimportant
_____ extremely unimportant
_____ other_____

CMM 411 Peer Evaluation Form   Name_____

<u>Directions:</u> The purpose of this form is for you to evaluate the contributions of each of your Social Issues project team members (NOT yourself). You need to think about what each member did to help the team make progress and complete its tasks in a timely and quality manner. **You will assign each member between 1 to 10 points in EACH of the three categories below.** If you think someone's commitment to the team as defined below was excellent, then you'd assign 8-10 points, so higher numbers of points reflect more positive evaluations.

Rating Categories
1. **Commitment** refers to showing up at meetings in class and meetings outside of class, being on time for meetings, completing assigned tasks when promised/expected, volunteering to do tasks for the team as needed.
2. **Quality of contributions** refers to doing a thorough and high quality job on individual tasks, speaking up and offering/discussing ideas relevant to the task at hand to the team, and locating relevant information for the team's topic.
3. **Team contributions** refers to making an effort to be cooperative, pulling one's weight but not dominating the team, and willingness to adjust one's schedule/preferences to enable the team to progress.

Member #1's name:_____

Commitment: _____

Quality of contributions: _____

Team contributions: _____

Total points (add the 3 scores): _____

_____

Member #2's name:_____

Commitment: _____

Quality of contributions: _____

Team contributions: _____

Total points (add the 3 scores): _____

_____

Member #3's name:_____

Commitment: _____

Quality of contributions: _____

Team contributions: _____

Total points (add the 3 scores): _____

_____

Member #4's name:_____

Commitment: _____

Quality of contributions: _____

Team contributions: _____

Total points (add the 3 scores): _____

_____

Member #5's name:_____

Commitment: _____

Quality of contributions: _____

Team contributions: _____

Total points (add the 3 scores): _____

_____

PEER EVALUATION FORM

Directions: Read the criteria below, which you will use to evaluate the contributions of each member of your project group except yourself. The form requires you to make distinctions among group members by forcing a type of rank ordering on each of the four criteria.

To complete the form, put the names of each group member on the lines provided corresponding to your assessment of their contributions **on each criterion. Therefore, you will be writing each member's name four (4) times. Do not rate yourself.** No more than two members can receive the same rating on a given criterion. There is an optional bonus and penalty section at the end to add or take away points.

Criteria

Service to the Group. Member showed a willingness to and followed through on performing tasks such as typing, writing, editing, proofreading, making phone calls, doing research, etc. The quality of the work was satisfactory or better.

Commitment to the Group. Member attended meetings, arrived on time, was prepared for meetings, stayed for the duration, and was willing to adjuct his/her schedule to help the group. Group goals/success seemed more important than personal convenience, goals or desires.

Task-Oriented Contributions. Member volunteered suggestions/ideas that advanced the group toward its goals, offered creative alternatives, examined/evaluated the quality of suggestions offered by members, supported ideas with factual evidence, showed task leadership, and wrote high quality prose for the group report.

Team Work. Member was attentive during meetings, didn't interrupt others, avoided negative (personality-based) conflict, promoted positive conflict (Idea-based), solicited and reinforced member's contributions, abandoned or modified own ideas for the sake of compromise, suggested rather than insisted, mediated conflicts, and broke tension when needed by the group.

Your name_____   Group Name_____

	Service	Commitment	Task Contributions	Team Work
Excellent (10 pts)				
Good (8 pts)				
Average (6 pts)				
Fair (4 pts)				
Poor (2 pts)				

Optional Sections:

<u>Bonus Section</u>

If there are any particular members that you feel ought to receive bonus points for any reason, you may assign between 1 to 5 additional points. To do so, list the person's name and how many points you are adding.

Name_____Number of points_____

Name_____Number of points_____

Name_____Number of points_____

Name_____Number of points_____

Name_____Number of points_____

<u>Penalty Section</u>

If there are any members that you feel ought to have points taken away because of lack of participation or significant disruption to the group, you may subtract between 1 to 5 points. To do so, list the person's name and how many points you are subtracting.

Name_____Number of points_____

Name_____Number of points_____

Name_____Number of points_____

Name_____Number of points_____

Name_____Number of points_____

CMM 222: Small Group Communication
Member Evaluation Form

Your name:_____

Group Name:_____   Group Number:_____

Please indicate for each member of your group (**with the exception of you**) whether his/her grade should be raised or lowered from the group grade. Base your recommendation on the member's **effort** and **performance** on the group project. Whether you like the member or not should not be a consideration for this evaluation.

1. Name: _____

    Please **Check one**:

    Raise Grade:_____   Keep the grade the same: _____   Lower Grade:_____

2. Name: _____

    Raise Grade:_____   Keep the grade the same: _____   Lower Grade: _____

3. Name:_____

    Raise Grade:_____   Keep the grade the same: _____   Lower Grade:_____

4. Name: _____

    Raise Grade:_____   Keep the grade the same: _____   Lower Grade: _____

5. Name: _____

    Raise Grade:_____   Keep the grade the same:_____   Lower Grade:_____

6. Name: _____

    Raise Grade:_____   Keep the grade the same:_____   Lower Grade:_____

CMM 222
Group Project #2: **Campus Action Project**

Your charge as a group is to identify a campus problem, research the problem and potential solutions, and propose a feasible solution. The project is broken down into 3 parts as described below. Your group is required to produce a final oral and written report. **You may not proceed until your topic is approved by me.**

Choosing a Topic

It is very important that you carefully choose the problem you will try to solve. Consider these criteria:

1. All members of the group should have some degree of enthusiasm for the topic. Otherwise, only those who are enthusiastic will feel like working on it.

2. Think somewhat small. You cannot solve the parking problem on campus, you cannot solve the problem of needing more residence halls, and you can't solve the problem of needing a strip of shops, restaurants and bookstores across the street from the campus. In the past groups have successfully tackled problems such as the lack of campus bus stop shelters, poor signage for buildings, no where to get rid of cigarette butts, televisions in the Sports Center, handicap access to buildings and so forth.

3. It is a <u>problem</u>, not a solution. Do not pick a solution to work with; pick a problem. Saying there should be small supply cabinets in all classrooms is a solution, not a problem. Saying that 3 lights need to be installed in Parking lot F is a solution, not a problem.

So take a few days to look around you as you go about your lives on campus and make a list of ideas. Ask friends and roommates about problems they have encountered. Physically or virtually visit other campuses to see how they function. Work from a list of quite a few ideas until you can choose one that meets the above criteria as well as my approval.

Part I: Analysis of the Problem and Preliminary Fact-Finding

First, you must do a careful analysis of the problem you are trying to solve. You will turn in Part I of the written report, which will include the following:
1. Your problem thesis, phrased in the form of a simple declarative sentence.
2. A section in which you discuss the nature and *history* (when did it start, why) of the specific problem you are trying to solve and why you selected it. Why should I (or the audience/students) care or be interested in this problem?
3. A preliminary discussion of the specific *symptoms/effects/magnitude* of the problem and its *causes,* as well as previously *attempted solutions* and why they failed.
4. A list of the information and people your group needs to gather and contact in order to better understand the problem and to come up with a solution

Part II: Fact-Finding, Criteria and Limitations

In part, your criteria for a solution will come from the causes of the problem and reasons why previous solutions failed. You will turn in Part II of the written report the following:

1. A summary of your fact-finding. Do this by organizing the information you found into categories such as "the problem and its history," "extent/symptoms," "causes of problem," and "previous solutions and why they failed."
2. A list and explanation of your limitations/constraints (legal, financial, personnel, time, etc.)
3. A list and explanation of your criteria.
4. A detailed list of all of your sources.

Part III: Solution

After you have clearly identified criteria for a solution which addresses the causes of the problem and remedies issues of previously unsuccessful solutions, you are to generate a solution. Brainstorm as many ideas as possible with no criticism of proposals. Your goal is to generate as many ideas (no matter how "crazy") as possible. After you have exhausted the brainstorming activity, evaluate your ideas against the criteria previously articulated. Select the plan/solution that best meets the established criteria. Often the final plan is a combination of ideas. Your final plan/solution should include the following:

1. A detailed plan to solve the problem, include three bids for the cost of the project (**be sure to tell whomever you are getting bids from that this is a class project and you are not authorized to purchase anything!**).
2. Include three variations of the project reflecting the ideal (most expensive), moderate (scaled down plan), and the budget/minimal (least expensive) solutions.
3. Demonstrate how your solution will address the causes of the problem and is superior to previous attempts to address the problem.
4. Articulate the advantages and benefits to your solution/plan. How will life be better, quantitatively (e.g., save/generate $, etc.) and qualitatively (e.g., aesthetically, save time, feel better, etc.).

Final Written Report

The final written report should contain the following sections: (1) a clear statement of the problem and its history, the extent of the problem/symptoms, causes of the problem and previously unsuccessful solutions; (2) the criteria for a solution; (3) a detailed discussion of your proposed solution (including bids and final cost estimates & who will do the work), alternative (scaled down) solutions, how your solution meets the causes of the problem and your established criteria; (4) advantages and benefits of your solution and (5) a signed Executive Summary (to be included in an appendix). Throughout the report you must incorporate the research that you did, citing all of your sources (e.g., written materials such as books, interviews with experts, and web sites) and include these sources on a reference page.

The written report is a technical report and therefore needs to have a title page, table of contents, headings between sections, references, and appendices. You need to number your pages.

Oral Report

During class groups will present their final oral reports. You will have 20-25 minutes for your presentation, followed by a 5-minute question and answer session. The oral report should minimally include a power point presentation. You may wish to utilize other visual aids and supporting material. Remember to dress professionally. You are encouraged to invite the individual who has ultimate responsibility for implementing your proposed solution to attend your presentation.

Project Rules

1. Your topic must be an on-campus problem.
2. You must follow the procedures outlined above.
3. You must get your topic approved by me.
4. **You must be professional in dealing with campus personnel or people from the community.**
5. **You must make it clear to all people with whom you deal that this is a course project and you are not authorized to approve anything.** For example, if you call local businesses for estimates, you must make it clear that you are not authorized to buy or order anything for the University.

Evaluation

Your grades will be based on the <u>content</u> of the presentations (the quality of your problem solving and use of Standard Agenda), the <u>organization</u> of the information, and the <u>presentation</u> of the reports (For written reports this refers to quality of writing and appearance of the report; for oral reports this refers to the smoothness of the presentation, speaker delivery, use of visual aids.)

Managing Groups in the Classroom
A Learn@Lunch Workshop

Obstacles to Group Success

A. Communication Obstacles

1. Poor or no communication among members.

2. Overuse of technology and insufficient face-to-face communication.

3. No written record of what's been discussed or decisions made.

B. Leadership Obstacles

1. No leadership.

2. Domineering leader.

C. Member Responsibility Obstacles

1. Members don't follow through and do their share of work.

2. Members are unprepared for meetings.

D. Mismanagement of Conflict

1. Groups avoid confronting problems or mishandle them.

2. Factions develop and don't work together.

Managing Groups in the Classroom
A Learn@Lunch Workshop

Overcoming Obstacles to Group Success

A. Communication Obstacles

1. Hold regular, in-person meetings.

2. Use communication technology to supplement the face-to-face.

3. Determine how minutes will be taken and share them on a common site.

B. Leadership Obstacles

1. Choose a leader or co-leaders.

2. Support the leader(s) by engaging in leadership behaviors such as helping to equalize member participation.

C. Member Responsibility Obstacles

1. Members need to prioritize the group goals.

2. Members must come to meetings prepared.

3. Members need to follow through on the tasks they've been assigned or volunteered for.

4. Members need to recognize that they are all collectively responsible for the total group output rather than focusing only on one's individual part.

D. Mismanagement of Conflict

1. Groups need to address problems and issues as they occur.

2. Groups need to deal with conflict directly and diplomatically.

3. Groups need to develop procedures and make sure all members understand and accept them.