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ABSTRACT
        This paper explores that various uses of group
communication in the basic course and how it can be used to bridge
and reinforce interpersonal and public speaking skills units.
Sections of the paper address group discussion as a content area,
integrating small group discussion into the public speaking unit,
integrating small groups into the communication processes and
interpersonal communication units, and group discussion as a
pedagogical choice. The paper also offers specific objectives and
activities for enhancing the group experience for students. An
appendix presents several group exercises and assessment/analysis
forms. Contains eight references. (Author/RS)

Enhancing group communication in the basic course:
Objectives and activities

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Running head: Group discussion and the basic course

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Abstract

This paper explores the various uses of group communication in the basic course and how it can be used to bridge and reinforce interpersonal and public speaking skills units. It also offers specific objectives and activities for enhancing the group experience for students.

Enhancing group communication in the basic course:
Objectives and activities

Marcia D. Dixson

Group discussion can be used in a number of ways to enhance the
teaching of group, public, and interpersonal communication skills and
concepts. Group discussion is both a content area and a pedagogical choice.

Group Discussion as a Content Area

As a content area, group discussion tends to center around teaching
specific concepts and skills for problem solving groups such as maintenance
roles, task roles, leadership skills, conflict management and the steps of
problem solving. Since this is an area most of us are familiar with, I will
not belabor the how or what to teach within the group discussion unit. I do
want to briefly relate some ideas drawn fro Phillips (1990) who believes
strongly that students cannot develop group communication skills by
observing and/or discussing group communication.

This does not mean that no observation of or discussion about group
concepts and skills should occur. Indeed, Keyton (1993) makes a strong case
for using television groups (drawn from drama and situation comedies) as an
effective way to show ineffective group communication, allow students to
practice group analysis/critique skills and to discuss more effective
alternatives of conflict management. Some information is certainly
necessary to refine student's perceptions of group communication.

However, if improvement of skills is a goal, then experience is

probably necessary. Phi lips (1990) using a good citizenship model believes students need to learn:

> *to "contrive" rules to legislate the group
>
> *to execute plans and carry out business of the group
>
> *to resolve conflict
>
> *to pay attention to goal seeking for the common good as well as

personal good

> *to exchange with one another
>
> *to suppress their personal wants and whims (pp. 276-277).

To enable students to reach these goals, Phillips (1990) believes that the instructional setting must simulate reality by enforcing:

> *limits on options
>
> *conformity to formats
>
> *regular reporting
>
> *deadlines
>
> *supervision
>
> *accountability
>
> *logistics and budgets

and creating questions which are complicated enough to generate interpersonal tensions (p. 280).

Furthermore, Phillips (1990) assigns the following roles to the instructor:

> *manipulate the environment
>
> *act as operations consultant (answer questions when asked, help

when asked, do not interfere in the decision making process)

> *help student with particular skills (diagnosis of communication

problems).

An effective device to "diagnose" strengths and weaknesses in group skills as well as teach other group concepts is the fish bowl technique. Fish bowls can either be one small group with the rest of the class observing or two or three small groups with each group having one or more assigned observers. The observers can analyze and comment on everything from who talks to whom investigating the flow of interaction, to specific roles, leadership skills, conflict management and the effects of hidden agendas (which can be planted in the group by the instructor). Observers can be assigned to make either oral or written comments or both. Oral comments can be useful since the instructor then has the opportunity to further explicate the analysis, point out important aspects that the observer may have missed, and do tactful repair, if such is necessary. Such a frank analysis should be preceded by a talk regarding tact in critiquing as well as being able to listen to and accept an honest critique of group skills.

The fish bowl technique can be very useful for helping individual students to identify specific skills they need to work on over the course of the semester. It can also be very time consuming, depending on how many groups are run concurrently.

Given this very general overview of the group discussion unit, I wish to turn to areas we may not consider as often: integrating group discussion into public speaking activities and interpersonal and communication processes learning.

Integrating Small Group Discussion into the Public Speaking Unit

A logical and common integration of groups with public speaking occurs
when group discussion becomes a performance or a precursor to performance.
The group discussion itself can become an early "speech" grade. By holding
a problem solving group discussion in front of an audience student's can do
a "performance" of sorts without the usual level of communication
apprehension which accompanies standing alone at the front of the room.
This allows them to "ease" into the public speaking arena with friends or at
lease fellow sufferers.

Such a performance is often the culmination of the group discussion
unit. The group has chosen a problem, divided up the information research
task and determined an agenda to follow while solving their problem in front
of the class. This can be followed by a questions and answer session with
the audience or a debriefing of he group procedure itself. for these kinds
of projects, some consideration of how groups are assigned and graded is
imperative.

Assigning groups

There are several methods that can be used to assign students to
groups. 1) Let them choose their own groups. This has the advantage of
allowing them to work with people they like and the disadvantage of
encouraging off-task conversation. There is also the problem of people who
do not know other students in the class feeling left out. 2) Put them into
groups randomly or through some kind of numbering system. This can be as
easy as having them number off 1 to 5 for five groups. A method I have used
is to assign each student a number and a letter (A1, B2 etc.) at the
beginning of the year. Then I can tell them to get into groups by number or

by letter or divide them into smaller groups by using letter and even/odd numbers. (Hint: For the first few weeks, keep a master list since most of them will forget). 3) Brainstorm topics to discuss/debate/solve etc.in groups and then allow students to sign up for topics they wish to work on. This has the considerable advantage of allowing students to go in already knowing the topic to pursue and of everyone being at least mildly interested in and committed to that topic. 4) You can ask them to analyze the way they work best and then assign them to groups with "like" people. This usually means grouping the "overachievers" together, the "let's do well, but not get anal" group together, and the "no you finish it" together. This may be better for group maintenance but does little to teach students about working with different kinds of people and may hinder project completion.

Grading groups

The continuing dilemma in grading group projects tends to center around two opposing factors: individual vs. group grading and process vs. product grading. The two are interrelated.

On the one hand, is it fair for Joe's grade to be dependent on Sally? Yes. Since in the "real world," committee, team and quality circle decision often stand as a decision or product with no explanation/justification of who did what amount of work or had better ideas. On the other hand, this is not the "real world," it is a classroom where we strive for fairness, especially in grading. If student keep a journal, turn in sources or copies of information they found, and do some kind of self and/or other evaluation, you can usually justify giving individual grades for work/process you have not directly observed. Or, you may choose to judge what you can see (the end product) and give everyone in the group the same grade, thus emphasizing

the importance of group skills and the interdependence of group members.

Another option is to be a coward, like myself, and compromise. I grade the performance/production only. I do not grade what I did not observe. Each individual members of the group gets based on the performed group discussion composed of four parts: 1) Material: The relevance, credibility, and validity of the information that member presented to the group. (Material that the student researched but did not present during the discussion is irrelevant since it was not made available to the group and, therefore, did not affect the decision making process. Otherwise, what you don't bring up, doesn't count). 2) Delivery: Are they assertive but tactful in presenting their ideas, asking questions, and countering others' ideas/opinions? Do they project enough to be heard? 3) Contribution: How well do they perform group roles which enhance the group discussion process besides presenting information (encouraging others to talk, mediating conflict, bringing the group back on task). 4) Group grade: Did the group reach a decision? Was it a group decision (did everyone participate)? How well did the follow the criteria for problem-solving?

In this way, 75% of an individual's grade in under his/her direct control. 25% of the grade is depending on the functions if he group. Thus, student's are motivated to do their best work as well as to encourage participation from all members of the group.

Another way of integrating group discussion more fully into the public speaking unit is to use groups of four to five people as a speaker "support/critique" group. These groups stay the same throughout the semester so students get to know each other and become aware of the kinds of problems each group member has with his/her speaking ability. The

procedures involved for this include:

1) Assigning to groups before the first individual speeches (I assign these randomly);

2) Passing out areas to critique for each speech and having students sign up to become "experts" in an area for that round of speeches: i.e., Content, Organization, Nonverbal delivery (Kinesics, eye contact, facial expression, proxemics); Paralanguage (projection, rate, fluency, emphasis, vocal variation); Overall Effectiveness. Students are responsible for critiquing each member of their group for their specific area of expertise.

3) After the day's speeches, student get into their groups to orally critique whoever from their group presented that day. (I organize the class so only one or two people per group present in a given class period);

4) For the next round or type of speech, student change their area of expertise.

This process is usually preceded by a class discussion/lecture on asking for and giving constructive criticism. I make the groups responsible for giving criticism and individuals responsible for asking questions to be sure they get the kind of feedback they need. (Speaker will also get written comments from me and a checklist critique sheet from two other students.)

These groups perform several valuable functions in that they generally become more supportive of each other while still allowing a more in depth critique than whole class critiques. A group will spend at least five and sometimes ten to fifteen minutes on one speaker (depending on time allotted). I rarely have enough time in class to allow for whole class critiques of that length or depth.

10

This also gives students more opportunity to experience group concepts such as norms and cohesion that may not have as much chance to develop in short term, zero history project groups.

Integrating Small Groups into the Communication Processes and
Interpersonal Communication Units

Small groups can create a less threatening environment for students to explore intrapersonal and interpersonal concepts and issues as well as general communication processes.

Communication Processes: Interpretation/Values/Underlying Assumptions

An activity that I use to underscore the influence of values and underlying assumptions on our interpretation processes is "NASA MISSION TO MARS" (Appendix A-1). This particular exercise calls for a group to become consultants to NASA who is worried that homosexual activity will occur on an extended space mission. The group must make a recommendation regarding what should be done. Important to this exercise is the assumption that "homosexual activity is bad" which is never stated in the exercise. If the group recognizes and rejects this assumption, the problem is solved. If they accept this assumption, then they must do some creative problem solving which quite often gets into discussions of professionalism, technology, women's abilities and rights and moral ramifications. Sometimes, I simply give them the exercise and see what they come up with. Other times I force the issue by asking them to identify both the underlying assumptions that NASA seems to have and their own underlying assumptions/values that influence the decision. This can also be a good exercise in perspective taking.

This kind of exercise can be used to discuss individual and cultural beliefs and how they affect perception and decision-making. It can also be used as a way to explore causes of conflict (unstated assumptions) and conflict management.

Interpersonal Issues: Self-disclosure

Devito (1988) has an activity called "I'D PREFER TO BE" (Appendix A-13). It asks students to number from 1 to 3 several categories of things they would like to be. Categories range from tree, flower, rock to blind, deaf, mute and smart, intelligent, rich. Students fill out the exercise individually and then in small groups discuss their ratings and why they made the choices they did. Although this is clearly a self-disclosure exercise, it works better in small groups because small groups allow for more support among members (there is more likely to be someone with similar rating as another student) and it also is less of an issue if a student chooses to "pass" and not explain his/her ratings. The absolute rule for this exercise is that student's must be allowed to pass with *no questions/comments*. This exercise is a good ice breaker early in the semester and can serve as an introduction to different perspectives as well as self-disclosing interactions.

Group Discussion as a Pedagogical Choice.

Beyond all of these specific ways for integrating group discussion is the integration of group discussion as a pedagogical choice in teaching. Group discussions are a less efficient method than lecture for imparting information. However, they usually more effective. They allow students to think about, talk about and internalize the concepts they are trying to

learn. According to Vygotsky, "mental processes in the individual have their origin in social processes" (Wertsch, 1985, p. 14). When group discussions are structured well, students become active in the learning process. This can be as involved as working through the problem solving process with a particular problem or as simple as having students responsible for presenting parts of the chapter or enacting examples (role-playing) of communication phenomenon. Active learning makes the course more enjoyable since time passes more quickly and students have the chance to get to know their fellow students, something that may not happen often in their other courses.

Small groups also allow the instructor to concentrate on facilitating students in areas *where they need help* rather than delivering a generic lecture to cover areas they may already have grasped from the text. The instructor becomes more approachable as he/she deals with students in groups of four to six rather than in groups of 20-25. Given the nature of the basic course and the apprehension that many of our students feel, developing a supportive atmosphere with peers and the instructor is a desirable benefit of group work.

I have included (Appendix) several group exercises and assessment/analysis forms. I hope this paper will stimulate instructors of the basic course to integrate group discussion through the course in creative and useful ways. Rarely does the group discussion unit allow students enough experience to adequately understand and hone their skills in this widely used communication context.

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The Kidney Machine

Each patient below needs a kidney machine. Only five machines are available because of the cost of manufacturing them. No more machines will be available in time to save all of these patients. Your panel, which consists of doctors, must decide, based on the information given, which patients will receive treatment and which will not. Those who do not receive treatment will die.

Mrs. Maria Vasquez:
29 years old; married, with six children ranging in age from 2 to 10 years; her husband is a printer who, along with his brother-in-law, owns a print shop.

Mrs. Mary Fortran:
31 years old; director of foods research for NASA; former Rhodes scholar with a Ph.D. in physics; working on a formula for a food capsule to be used in space travel; divorced, with no children.

Mike Carbona:
39 years old; an ex-convict, convicted for tax evasion; served seven years; active in local politics in New Jersey, known as the spearhead behind the minority rights program in his area; suspected of having criminal connections; the nine Korean orphans he supports do not know of his former involvement in crime.

Peter Maximo:
9 years old; has an IQ of 160, but is severely mentally disturbed at having witnessed the car accident that killed two of his parents' friends; has not spoken a word for over two years.

Mrs. Terry McBride:
27 years old; an instructor at a local university working on her M.S. in communication; her husband is partially blind and receives disability payments from the Army; no children; debts include car loans and a 30-year mortgage on a house.

Dick Constable:
35 years old; a bachelor and federal narcotics agent in Chicago, primarily arresting heroin dealers; active in community youth organizations; engaged to be married.

Father Mussello:
53 years old; a Dominican friar and headmaster of a parochial school; organizes missions to help with Navajo education in New Mexico; counsels juvenile delinquents.

Thomas Washington:
19 years old; a freshman at New York University; lives with his family in Harlem; his father died when he was very little; insurance money is paying for his education; a member of a radical group whose avowed purpose is to foster anarchy in America.

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NASA Mission to Mars*
Information for consultant group

The United States plans to send a manned operation to Mars
in 1987. The mission will require two spaceships, each
carrying a crew of six. It will take a total of 590 days
from blastoff to return. One of the many problems that is
as yet unresolved is what to do about the crew's sex drives.
NASA are convinced that homosexual activity will be
inevitable unless women crew members are included to take
care of these needs. Because of the training and technical
competencies required of crew members, however, it is
unlikely that the astronauts' wives would qualify. NASA has
employed your group as a consultant. Be prepared to present
and defend your recommendations.

You will be asked to present your recommendations, *in
writing*, to Dr. Marcia D. Dixson, the chairperson of the
Committee to Relieve Sexual Frustration in Space, by October
15. This activity is worth 25 points on your participation
grade. Groups will be graded in the following manner: 15
points - completed the assignment; 20 points - completed the
assignment with solid justification for their decision and
understanding of the underlying assumptions (regarding
sexual preferences, individual rights, individual needs
etc.) upon which that decision is based; 25 points - came up
with the best solution as well as had solid justifications
for their decision and an understanding of the underlying
assumptions (regarding sexual preferences, individual
rights, individual needs etc.) upon which that decision is
based. Good luck!

Adapted from V. Ruggiero, The Moral Imperative

B2

Group Exercise

The Four-Car Problem

. You are facing a closed garage containing four cars parked side-by-side. Using the information given below, you should be able to tell the order in which the cars are parked (from left to right), as well as the make, year, and color of each car and the state it is licensed in. You are provided with the following information:

1. The Rambler has a Pennsylvania license.

2. The yellow car has an Ohio license.

3. The Buick is next to the Plymouth.

4. The car with the New York license is parked between the 1971 and 1969 models.

5. The 1971 model is blue.

6. The Plymouth is on the right (as you face the cars.)

7. The red car has a California license.

8. The Ford is next to the Rambler.

9. The car from Pennsylvania is not parked next to the car from Ohio.

10. The Ford is green.

11. The Plymouth was built in 1960.

12. The 1969 model has a California license.

13. The green car has a 1965 license.

Small-Group Characteristics in Action

Goal   To allow the participants to experience the effects of changing various characteristics of the small-group process.

Group Size   At least four subgroups of four or five participants each.

Time Required   Forty-five minutes to one hour.

Materials   1. Paper and a pencil for each participant.
2. A newsprint poster of the six characteristics of small groups:
   ■ Size
   ■ Interaction
   ■ Belonging
   ■ Goal
   ■ Roles
   ■ Norms

   The facilitator prepares this poster in advance and displays it during Step 3 of the activity.

Physical Setting   A room large enough so that the subgroups can work without disturbing one another. Writing surfaces should be provided.

Process   1. The facilitator asks the participants to form subgroups of four or five members each. Then the facilitator gives each subgroup the following task:

   "Your subgroup is the Committee to Improve Small-Group Functioning. In the committee meeting you are about to attend, you are to determine the important issues to be considered in order to complete your task of recommending changes to improve small-group functioning."

   Paper and pencils are distributed, and the subgroups are told to start.

   2. As soon as the subgroups are into the task, the facilitator interrupts with the first instruction listed

1 ö

below. Additional instructions are given periodically while the subgroups work.

- "For the next three minutes, you are to communicate with one another only in writing. There is to be no talking."
- "For the next three minutes, you are to behave as if you do not feel a part of your subgroup."
- "For the next three minutes, you are to forget the subgroup's goal and pursue the individual goals you hold at the moment."
- "For the next three minutes, each of you is to attempt to lead the subgroup."
- "For the next three minutes, you are to cooperate fully with the other members of your subgroup."
- "For the next three minutes, your subgroup will join with another to complete the task."

3. The facilitator reassembles the total group, displays the newsprint poster of the six characteristics of a small group, briefly presents these characteristics to the participants, and then leads a discussion based on these questions:

- What effect did each characteristic have on the other characteristics? (The facilitator asks the group to consider the six characteristics—size, interaction, belonging, goal, roles, and norms— one at a time.)
- What effect do continual changes have on a group's completion of a task?
- How do the six characteristics relate to the issues you discussed while your subgroup was working on the task?
- Which characteristic(s) might you change in a group to which you belong to make that group function better?

Jury Verdicts

Goal To increase the participants' awareness of the effect that an individual's philosophy of human nature has on his or her beliefs and communication behaviors.

Group Size Three subgroups of participants who have already been introduced to the communication process.

Materials 1. Handouts on different philosophical assumptions.
2. A newsprint flip chart and a felt-tipped marker.

Physical Setting A room large enough so that the subgroups can work without disturbing one another.

Process 1. The facilitator asks the participants to assemble into three subgroups and then gives each subgroup a set of philosophical assumptions for its members. (One subgroup receives copies of Assumption 1; another subgroup receives copies of Assumption 2; and the third receives copies of Assumption 3.)
2. The members of each subgroup are told to communicate opinions and behave as if they upheld those assumptions while completing the following task (but *not* to discuss the assumptions or behaviors implied by those assumptions):

"Your group is a jury that can recommend a sentence. The defendant is a twenty-five-year-old widower with three grade school children. He is unemployed and has not been able to get his welfare checks. He was caught stealing $100 of merchandise from a grocery store. What penalty would you recommend?"
3. After the subgroups have completed the task, the facilitator elicits and posts each subgroup's verdict, reassembles the total group, and reads the three basic assumptions.
4. The facilitator leads a concluding discussion based on these questions:
   ■ Do the verdicts reflect the assumptions?
   ▮ Did communication patterns in your subgroup reflect the assumption?

   ■ How comfortable were you in communicating as if you held these assumptions?
   ■ Do basic assumptions affect our communication? If so, in what way?
   ■ How could you more clearly indicate the influence that your basic values/assumptions have on what you communicate?

ASSUMPTION HANDOUTS

_____

Assumption 1
You believe that people are basically evil, governed by animalistic instincts and seeking gratification. The way to control people is through threat and punishment.

_____

Assumption 2
You believe that people are neither good nor bad, but determined by the society and environment in which they live. The way to control people is through persuasion and reward.

_____

Assumption 3
You believe that people are basically good. Given no obstacles, people will fulfill their individual potentials. There is no need to control people, only to show them compassion and understanding.

_____

The Encyclopedia of Group Activities   147

Identifying Group Purposes

Goal To demonstrate how different group purposes affect group process.

Group Size Four subgroups (A, B, C, and D) of five to seven participants each.

Time Required One hour and fifteen minutes.

Materials 1. A set of task sheets for each subgroup:
- A copy of Task Sheet A for each member of subgroup A.
- A copy of Task Sheet B for each member of subgroup B.
- A copy of Task Sheet C for each member of subgroup C.
- A copy of Task Sheet D for each member of subgroup D.

2. A newsprint flip chart and a felt-tipped marker for each subgroup.

Physical Setting A room large enough so that the subgroups can work without disturbing one another.

Process 1. The participants are assembled into four subgroups of five to seven members each. These subgroups are designated A, B, C, and D.

2. Each subgroup is given a different set of instructions according to its letter (A, B, C, or D) designation, a newsprint flip chart, and a felt-tipped marker.

3. The facilitator stipulates that each subgroup is to spend twenty minutes completing its task and recording its list of steps on newsprint.

4. After twenty minutes the four subgroups are instructed to stop working and to post their newsprint lists.

5. The facilitator explains the four basic purposes of groups (social, study/educational, problem solving, and therapeutic).

6. The facilitator leads a discussion of the contents of each posted list, explaining how each is different according to the purpose of the subgroup's task: Task Sheet A presents a *social* task; Task Sheet B presents a *study/educational* task; Task Sheet C presents a *problem-solving* task; Task Sheet D presents a *therapeutic* task.

6. The facilitator leads a discussion based on the following questions:
   - ■ Which steps were similar? Which steps were different?
   - ■ Which purposes seemed clearer and easier to fulfill than others?
   - ■ What difficulties did you experience in attending to the steps rather than the content? What were your reactions to these difficulties?
   - ■ Does one purpose appeal to you more than another? If so, what is it about that purpose that you like?
   - ■ What is the primary purpose of this group?
   - ■ What are the purposes of other groups that you belong to?
   - ■ How can understanding a group's purpose help you in improving that group's process (the way in which it operates)?

TASK SHEET A

Your group is in charge of planning the next block party for your neighborhood. What steps will you follow in deciding what to do?

TASK SHEET B

Your group is to analyze and evaluate the movie *Star Wars*. What steps will you follow in completing this task?

TASK SHEET C

Your group is to find an answer to your employer's chaotic parking problem. What steps will you follow in completing this task?

TASK SHEET D

Your group is attempting to comfort a member who has just lost a loved one. What steps will you follow in achieving your goal?

Group Commandments

Goals
1. To help the participants recognize the extent to which a person's rules for others are representative of his or her value system.
2. To encourage participation.

Group Size
Unlimited, although the activity is most effectively used with no more than twelve members of a personal-growth group.

Time Required
One to one and one-half hours.

Materials
Paper and a pencil for each participant.

Physical Setting
Any room large enough to accommodate all of the participants. Writing surfaces should be provided.

Process
1. The facilitator distributes paper and pencils and gives these instructions:
   "'You should not kill' is a commandment for human beings. Similarly, there are 'shoulds' and 'should nots' for members of groups like ours. I'd like you to spend the next five minutes writing five commandments that you feel a member of any group should follow."
2. After five minutes the facilitator asks each participant to read his or her list of group commandments and to explain the reasoning behind each commandment. The participants are cautioned not to respond as they listen to the readings and explanations.
3. Each participant is instructed to reread his or her commandments silently. Then the facilitator leads a discussion, concentrating on analyzing where the commandments come from (value investigation), the extent to which each participant follows his or her own commandments, areas of agreement and disagreement within the group, the reality of the various commandments, and so on. The following questions may be asked:
   - Whose commandments were too ideal? If yours were chosen as too ideal, do you agree? What

is your reaction to hearing that your command-
ments are too ideal?

■ Whose list is most realistic and why?

■ If I announced that in this group we would obey
all of these commandments, which ones would
you personally follow and why? Which would you
refuse to follow and why?

■ If you could rewrite your list at this point, what
would you drop from it and why? What would
you add to it and why?

Variation To encourage a vigorous, dynamic discussion about the
positive and negative aspects of each commandment,
the facilitator may ask each participant to tell the group
which of his or her five commandments is the most im-
portant. The other participants then record that per-
son's name; the commandment; and the words "I
agree" or "I disagree," depending on their feelings
about the commandment in question. After this proc-
ess has been completed for all participants, the
facilitator begins reviewing the commandments one by
one, asking those who agree to sit on one side of a cir-
cle and those who disagree to sit on the other. After
the participants have selected their positions on a given
commandment, the two sides spend ten minutes
discussing the merits, inadequacies, and so forth of the
commandment and try to reach a consensus about
whether the commandment should or should not be
included in the "best-five" list. The activity continues
until all of the commandments have been debated.

B7

Frustration:
A Feedback Activity

Goals
1. To help the participants become aware of their responses to frustrating situations.
2. To enable the participants to observe forms of nonverbal behavior exhibited by frustrated/uneasy listeners.

Group Size   Any number of triads.

Time Required   One hour.

Materials
1. A copy of the appropriate instruction sheet for each A, B, and C participant.
2. Paper and a pencil for each participant.
3. A newsprint flip chart and a felt-tipped marker.

Physical Setting   A large room (or several rooms) in which the triads can be separated from one another by at least fifteen feet. Portable writing surfaces should be provided.

Process
1. The facilitator asks the participants to form triads.
2. Each triad is asked to select one member to play participant A, one to play B, and one to play C.
3. After temporarily segregating all participants according to their A, B, and C functions, the facilitator distributes their appropriate instruction sheets and offers a brief question-and-answer session about their directions. When speaking with the A participants, the facilitator suggests a list of possible topics to discuss in the triads. The C participants are given paper and pencils to make notes. All participants are instructed *not* to show their directions to other members of their triads.
4. The participants return to their original triads and begin the process according to their instructions. The process proceeds for a minimum of two minutes to a maximum of ten minutes.
5. On completion of the designated time period, the participants again form subgroups according to their A, B, and C functions. The facilitator asks

26

the members of each subgroup to share their perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and observations about the process in the triads. Each subgroup receives paper and pencils in order to make a list of the feelings related by its individual members. (This discussion lasts approximately ten minutes.)

6. The facilitator reassembles the subgroups into one large group.

7. The A participants are asked to list their behaviors during the triad activity. (All participants may respond to the list.) Then the B participants are asked to list their feelings and perceptions concerning the triad process. Then the C participants offer their observations of the nonverbal behaviors. Both A and B participants are asked about the effects of the evaluative statements in their directions.

8. The facilitator explores the feelings that the B participants experienced and discusses other situations in which they have experienced the same feelings.

9. The facilitator leads a discussion on some of the causes of frustration in communication, how perceptions are affected by frustration, how people react when frustrated, how one handles frustration, and how one causes frustration.

10. The facilitator asks the participants to name groups of people or individuals who exhibit behaviors like the A participants, the B participants, and the C participants. The facilitator helps them make comparisons between or among professions or various groups of people.

Variations

1. The list of topics chosen by the A participants may vary considerably in content focus. The items should reflect the common interest of the subgroup and should be ones about which the participants can easily converse.

2. Instead of using triads for the activity, subgroups of six participants each may be formed. The directions would remain essentially the same; but there would be two A participants, two B participants, and two C participants. (Or, alternatively, there may be two A participants, one B, and three C participants.)

3. This activity may be followed by one that helps participants deal with frustration and avoid causing frustration in communication.

158

University Associates

FRUSTRATION INSTRUCTION SHEETS

_____

Participant A

Tasks:

A. Your function in the triad is to relate your point of view on one of the topics suggested by the facilitator. Speak continuously in a normal tone of voice for at least two to ten minutes. You are *not* to answer questions! When questions are asked, you may either nod or ignore the question completely. Remember, you are to speak continuously for the allotted time period.

B. The function of participant B is to break your train of thought and to stall for time.

C. The function of participant C is to *grade* you, based on the following criteria:
   1. Did you speak for the full time?
   2. Did you speak clearly?
   3. Was participant B able to stop you? Did you answer questions?

Note:
   Remember, participant A, *you* are being graded!

_____

Participant B

Tasks:

A. While participant A speaks on one of the topics, your function is to ask him or her questions. You may ask clarification questions or you may ask questions of logic. You *must* stop participant A and make this participant clarify his or her position because you may be selected to restate this point of view to the group.

B. The function of participant A is to explain his or her point of view and to make that perfectly clear to you by responding to your questions.

C. The function of participant C is to observe *you*. He or she will note the frequency and quality of the questions you ask and the explanation you receive from participant A. *If the explanation is not clear, you will not receive credit for the question.*

Note:
   Remember, participant B, *you* are being graded!

_____

Participant C

Tasks:

You are an observer. Make sure that participants A and B are directly facing each other and are no more than four feet apart. You are to place yourself an equal distance from each and far enough to the side so that neither can see what you are writing. During the triad interaction, note the nonverbal behavior exhibited by both participants. When one smiles or nods, for example, take notes. Do not worry about the content of the discussion. Take as many notes as possible. They will be very necessary to the discussion later.

Active Listening

Goals　1. To introduce the participants to the principles of empathic/active listening.

2. To offer the participants an opportunity to practice deciding ᴠ hat kinds of statements call for empathic/active-listening skills.

Group Size　Subgroups of four or five participants each.

Time Required　One hour and fifteen to thirty minutes.

Materials　1. A copy of the Statements Handout for each participant.

2. Paper and a pencil for each participant.

Physical Setting　A room large enough so that the subgroups can work without disturbing one another. Writing surfaces should be provided.

Process　1. The facilitator gives a lecturette on the principles of empathic/active listening and elicits and answers questions.

2. The participants are instructed to form subgroups of four or five members each. Each participant is given a copy of the Statements Handout, paper, and a pencil.

3. Each subgroup is told to discuss each of the statements and determine what response should be made and why.

4. Each statement on the handout is covered separately. The facilitator asks the subgroups to report their responses and reasons, leads a discussion of whether these responses are representative of empathic/active-listening skills, and helps the total group to determine which response might be most appropriate.

5. The facilitator leads a concluding discussion about why empathic/active listening is important in enhancing communication efforts.

STATEMENTS HANDOUT

1. I wonder if I ought to start looking for another job. They're reorganizing the company, and what with the drop in business and all maybe this is one of the jobs they'll cut. But if my boss finds out I'm looking around, maybe he'll think I don't like it here and let me go anyway.

2. I said I'd do the collecting for him, but I sure don't feel like it. I owe him a favor, though, so I guess I'll have to do it.

3. I've got a report due tomorrow, an exam the next day, rehearsals every night this week, and now a meeting this afternoon. I don't think I can even fit in eating, and this has been going on all month.

4. Sure she gets better grades than I do. She's a housewife, takes only two classes, and all she has to do is study. I have to work a job and go to school too. And I don't have anyone to support me.

5. I can't understand why they haven't written. They've never been gone this long without at least a card, and I don't even know how to get in touch with them.

6. My daughter got straight A's this year, and the high school has a reputation for being very hard. She's a natural student. But sometimes I wonder if she isn't all books. I wish I could help her get interested in something besides studying.

7. I worked up that whole study—did all the surveying, the compiling, the writing. It was my idea in the first place. But he turned it in to the head office with his name on it, and he got the credit.

8. Boy, the teacher tells us he'll mark us off on our grades every time we're late, but it doesn't seem to bother him when he comes in late. He must figure it's his privilege.

9. I don't know whether I'm doing a good job or not. She never tells me if I'm doing well or need to work harder. I sure hope she likes my work.

10. She believed everything he said about me. She wouldn't even listen to my side; she just started yelling at me.

11. Look, we've gone over and over this. The meeting could have been over an hour ago if we hadn't gotten hung up on this one point. If we can't make a decision, let's table it and move on.

12. Look, I know I acted like a rat. I apologized, and I'm trying to make up for it. I can't do any more, can I? So drop it!

Random Rules and Capricious Consequences: Using Power Effectively

Goals
1. To demonstrate how the arbitrary misuse of power by a group leader can frustrate, annoy, or simply "turn off" group members.
2. To demonstrate the importance of using power wisely and sharing power.
3. To facilitate the expression of frustration induced by arbitrary reward systems.

Group Size Any number of subgroups of five persons each.

Time Required Fifty minutes.

Materials
1. A copy of the Group Leader's Instruction Sheet for each appointed leader.
2. Paper and a pencil for each participant.

Physical Setting A comfortable setting in which several subgroups can work without distracting one another.

Process
1. The facilitator assembles the participants into subgroups of five persons each, randomly appoints a leader for each subgroup, and distributes the paper and pencils. A copy of the Group Leader's Instruction Sheet is given to each subgroup leader, and the leaders are instructed to read the sheet.
2. The leaders conduct three games with the members of their subgroups. (Fifteen minutes).
3. After the scoring has been completed, the facilitator asks the participants to form one large group to discuss the games, the rules, and the leaders. The participants are encouraged to relate some of their feelings of frustration and resentment concerning their participation.
4. The facilitator reviews the rules of the games and directs the discussion toward the use and misuse of power. Other areas may also be discussed:

   - How might situations like games 2 and 3 cause "losers" to stop participating in learning situations?
   - What did games 2 and 3 have to say to you about group rules?
   - What were your feelings toward the leader during games 1, 2, and 3?
   - How did it feel to discover and/or not to discover the rule in game 1?
   - How did you feel about the games after you found out the rules?
   - What were your reactions to having everything you said be wrong in the latter two games?

3c

- How did your perceptions of the winner and/or leader change in games 2 and 3?
- How might similar situations with hidden rules be inadvertently created in a learning-group discussion (for example, only special textbook words may be accepted by the facilitator)?

GROUP LEADER'S INSTRUCTION SHEET

You will conduct three games with the members of your subgroup. The instructions for each game are the same (see instructions below). Discuss the instructions and the method of scoring with your subgroup.

Reveal the rule of the game only if a subgroup member guesses it. Otherwise, tell the subgroup members that they must wait until the three games have been completed. At the completion of the three games, go over the game answers and ask each subgroup member to total his or her score to see who is the winner.

Instructions: "I will ask you a question, and you should answer as quickly as possible. You will receive two points for each correct answer. If you can guess why your answers were acceptable (that is, guess the rule of the game), you will receive a bonus of twenty points at the end of the game. The person with the most points at the end of five minutes wins. Each person should keep his or her own score."

Game 1

Q. Name the states in the United States. Try to discover the rule that corroborates your answer.

A. *Rule*—States must border the Atlantic Ocean. Correct answers are Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia.

Game 2

Q. Name a country of the world. Try to discover the rule that corroborates your answer.

A. *Rule*—Only the responses of the tallest or blue-eyed or other capriciously designated person are correct, while the responses of all other subgroup members are incorrect.

Game 3

Q. Name animals of the world. Try to discover the rule that corroborates your answer.

A. Only the responses of some capriciously designated person, exclusive of the previous winner, are correct; the responses of all other subgroup members are incorrect.

Instructions: Rate yourself on each item by putting a check mark in the "Yes" or "No" column. Your score is five times the number of items marked "Yes." Rating: *excellent*, 90 or higher; *good*, 80–85; *fair*, 70–75; *inadequate*, 65 or lower.

	Yes	No
1. I prepared all needed facilities.	___	___
2. I started the meeting promptly and ended on time.	___	___
3. I established an atmosphere of supportiveness and informality; I was open and responsive to all ideas.	___	___
4. I clearly oriented the group to its goal and area of freedom.	___	___
5. I encouraged all members to participate and maintained equal opportunity for all to speak.	___	___
6. I listened actively, and (if needed) encouraged all members to do so.	___	___
7. My questions were clear and brief.	___	___
8. I saw to it that unclear statements were paraphrased or otherwise clarified.	___	___
9. I used a plan for leading the group in an organized consideration of all major phases of problem solving.	___	___
10. I saw to it that the problem was discussed thoroughly before solutions were considered.	___	___
11. I actively encouraged creative thinking.	___	___
12. I encouraged thorough evaluation of information and all ideas for solutions.	___	___
13. I integrated related ideas or suggestions and urged the group to arrive at consensus on a solution.	___	___
14. I prompted open discussion of substantive conflicts.	___	___
15. I maintained order and organization, promptly pointing out tangents, making transitions, and keeping track of the passage of time.	___	___
16. I saw to it that the meeting produced definite assignments or plans for action, and that any subsequent meeting was arranged.	___	___
17. All important information, ideas, and decisions were promptly and accurately recorded.	___	___
18. I was able to remain neutral during constructive arguments, and otherwise encourage teamwork.	___	___
19. I suggested or urged establishment of needed norms and standards.	___	___
20. I encouraged members to discuss how they felt about the group process and procedures.	___	___

Galanes, G. J. & Brilhart, J.K. (1991). Communicating in groups: Applications and skills. Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark. p. 307.

D12

Date _____ Leader _____

Time _____ Observer _____

Instructions: Rate the leader on all items that are applicable; draw a line through all items that do not apply. Use the following scale to indicate how well you evaluate his or her performance:

> 5—superior
> 4—above average
> 3—average
> 2—below average
> 1—poor

Personal Style and Communicative Competencies

1) To what degree did the leader:

_____ Show poise and confidence in speaking?

_____ Show enthusiasm and interest in the problem?

_____ Listen well to understand *all* participants?

_____ Manifest personal warmth and a sense of humor?

_____ Show an open mind toward all new information and ideas?

_____ Create a supportive, cooperative atmosphere?

_____ Share functional leadership with other members?

_____ Behave democratically?

_____ Maintain perspective on problem and group process?

Preparation

To what degree:

_____ Were all needed physical arrangements cared for?

_____ Were members notified and given guidance in preparing to meet?

_____ Was the leader prepared on the problem or subject?

_____ Was a procedural sequence of questions prepared to guide discussion?

Procedural and Interpersonal Leadership Techniques

To what degree did the leader:

_____ Put members at ease with each other?

_____ Equalize opportunity to speak?

_____ Control aggressive or dominant members with tact?

_____ Present an agenda and procedure for group problem solving?

_____ Encourage members to modify the procedural outline?

_____ State questions clearly to the group?

_____ Introduce and explain the charge or problem so it was clear to all?

_____ Guide the group through a thorough analysis of problem before discussing solutions?

_____ Stimulate imaginative and creative thinking about solutions?

_____ Encourage the group to evaluate all ideas and proposals thoroughly before accepting or rejecting them?

_____ See that plans were made to implement and follow-up on all decisions?

_____ Keep discussion on one point at a time?

_____ Rebound questions asking for a personal opinion or solution to the group?

_____ Provide summaries needed to clarify, remind, and move group forward to next issue or agenda item?

_____ Test for consensus before moving to a new phase of problem solving?

_____ Keep complete and accurate notes, especially of all proposals and decisions?

_____ If needed, suggest compromise or integrative solutions to resolve conflict?

_____ (Other—please specify _____)

Brilhart, J.K. & Galanes, G.J. (1992). Effective group discussion. Seventh edition. USA: Wm. C. Brown Publishers. p. 344-345.

"I'D PREFER TO BE"

1. _____ intelligent
   _____ wealthy
   _____ physically attractive

2. _____ movie star
   _____ senator
   _____ successful businessperson

3. _____ blind
   _____ deaf
   _____ mute

4. _____ on a date
   _____ reading a book
   _____ watching television

5. _____ loved
   _____ feared
   _____ respected

6. _____ alone
   _____ with a group of people
   _____ with one person

7. _____ brave
   _____ reliable
   _____ insightful

8. _____ communicating by phone
   _____ communicating by letter
   _____ communicating face to face

9. _____ traitor to a friend
   _____ traitor to one's country
   _____ traitor to oneself

10. _____ bisexual
    _____ heterosexual
    _____ homosexual

11. _____ the loved
    _____ the lover
    _____ the good friend

12. _____ introvert
    _____ extrovert
    _____ ambivert

13. _____ a tree
    _____ a rock
    _____ a flower

14. _____ a leader
    _____ a follower
    _____ a loner

15. (Ten years from now)
    _____ married
    _____ single
    _____ living with someone but
    _____ unmarried

452

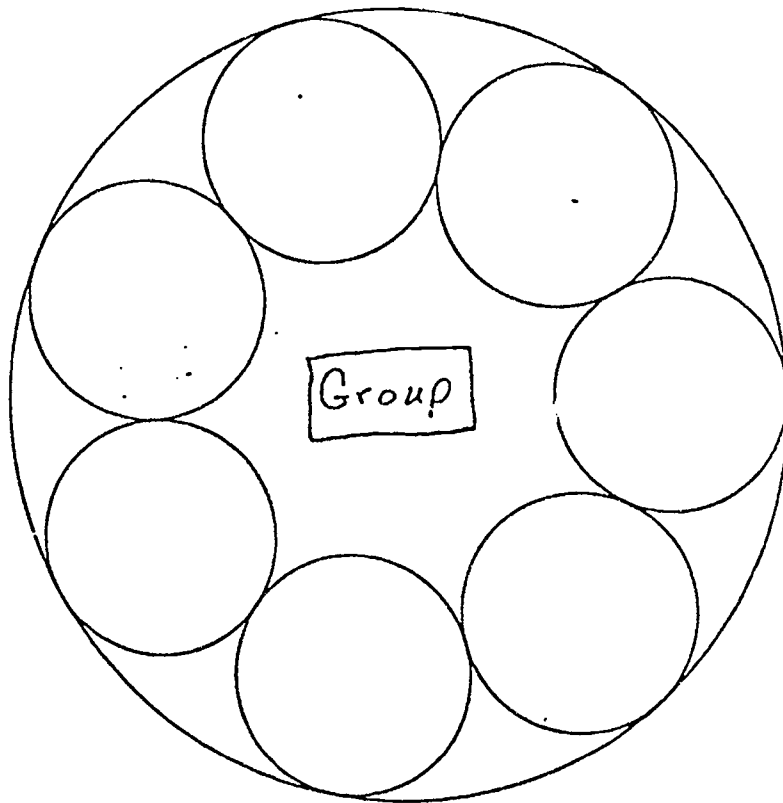DeVito, J. A. (1988). <u>Human communication: The Basic course</u>. Fourth Edition. New York: Harper & Row. pp. H8-H9.
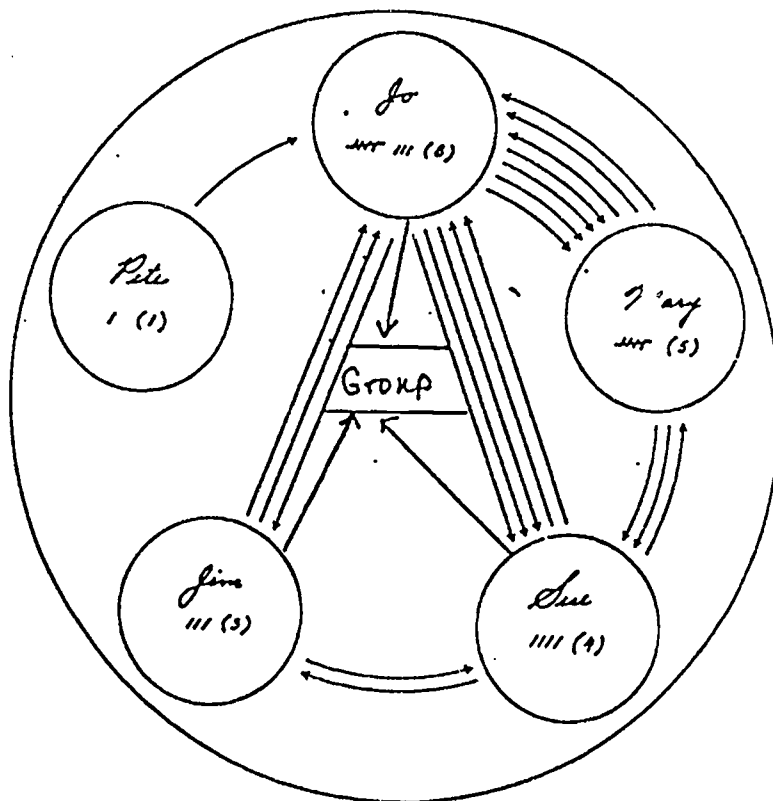
FIGURE 22.
Blank form for a sociogram.

FIGURE 23. Sociogram.