Compendium

Experts in Teamwork 2011

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Schwarz (2002): The skilled facilitator. Jossey –Bass.
Kap 2: What Makes Work Groups Effective? (s 17-34)
Kap 5: Ground Rules for Effective Groups (s 96 – 136)

Johnson & Johnson (2006): Joining together. Group theory and group skills. Pearson.
Kap 1: Group dynamics (s 1 – 44)
Kap 10: Valuing diversity (s 440 – 474)

Wheelan, Susan A. (2009): Creating Effective Teams. A Guide for Members and Leaders. Third Edition. SAGE.
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Schwarz [2002]

CHAPTER TWO

What Makes Work Groups Effective?

Because you are called on to help groups become more effective, it is important to have a model of group effectiveness as part of your approach. To be useful, the model needs to tell you what an effective group looks like. In this chapter, I describe a group effectiveness model and how to use it. We begin by defining what makes a work group; identifying criteria for assessing a group's effectiveness; and then discussing how a group's process, structure, and organizational context contribute to effectiveness. The chapter concludes with discussion of the potential and the limits of facilitation in creating an effective group.

You probably have had a variety of experiences working in groups. For most people, the experience is mixed. In some groups, the members work well together, accomplish the task, and meet some of each member's needs. In other groups, the task is done poorly (if at all), the members do not work well together, and members feel frustrated. What factors, according to the members, might contribute to the group's success? For example, do they have clear goals? Do the members agree on how they should work together? What factors might members say contribute to the group's ineffectiveness? Is there undiscussed conflict? Are members not motivated by the tasks? Are they missing certain expertise?

The answers to these questions begin to describe a model of group effectiveness. I think of a model as a particular way to see and think about something. The group effectiveness model is like a special pair of glasses (or contact

lenses, in my case) that enable you to see and understand what is determining the group's effectiveness. Each of us has a model about what makes a group effective, even if the model includes only two or three elements. Even if you are not conscious of your model, you still use it to guide your diagnosis and intervention, to decide where to look when things go wrong, and to know what to change.

As George Box, mentor of W. Edwards Deming said, "All models are wrong; some are useful." Because a model is a simplified way to describe how something works—in this case, a group—it does not need to capture all the complexities of what it attempts to model. But if your model of a group is underdeveloped, it limits your ability to help the group.

To draw an analogy, one difference between my auto mechanic and me is that when he looks at my car engine, he can figure out what is wrong because he has a model in his head of which engine parts should be present, what they should look like, how they should interact, and what the output should be. By comparing his mental model of the engine with the actual engine, he can identify what might be missing or malfunctioning. In contrast, my mental model of an engine is primitive; I don't know many of the parts or how they should function together. So I have found myself staring at the car en gine with my mechanic, without a clue about where to look, as he points out a faulty part that I didn't know should be part of the engine to begin with.

Not knowing the details of how an engine works used to bother me, but I've made peace with the fact that I can rely on others to know this for me and to fix my car. As a facilitator (or facilitative leader), you do not have this option when it comes to groups. Here, my analogy breaks down because the interaction in a group is more complex than in an engine, and because the facilitator is not a fixer. Still, **you need a model of groups that shows you what an effective group looks like, the elements that contribute to its effectiveness, and how the elements should interact.** Then you can use the model to help members of a group diagnose problems they are having, and help them make changes to improve their effectiveness.

THE GROUP EFFECTIVENESS MODEL

The group effectiveness model contains several parts. First, I define what it means to be a work group. Second, I identify criteria for an effective group. Third, I describe the factors and elements that interact to create an effective group. The model in this chapter (see Figure 2.1) draws on the work of J. Richard Hackman (1987) and Eric Sundstrom, Kenneth P. De Meuse, and David Futrell (1990).

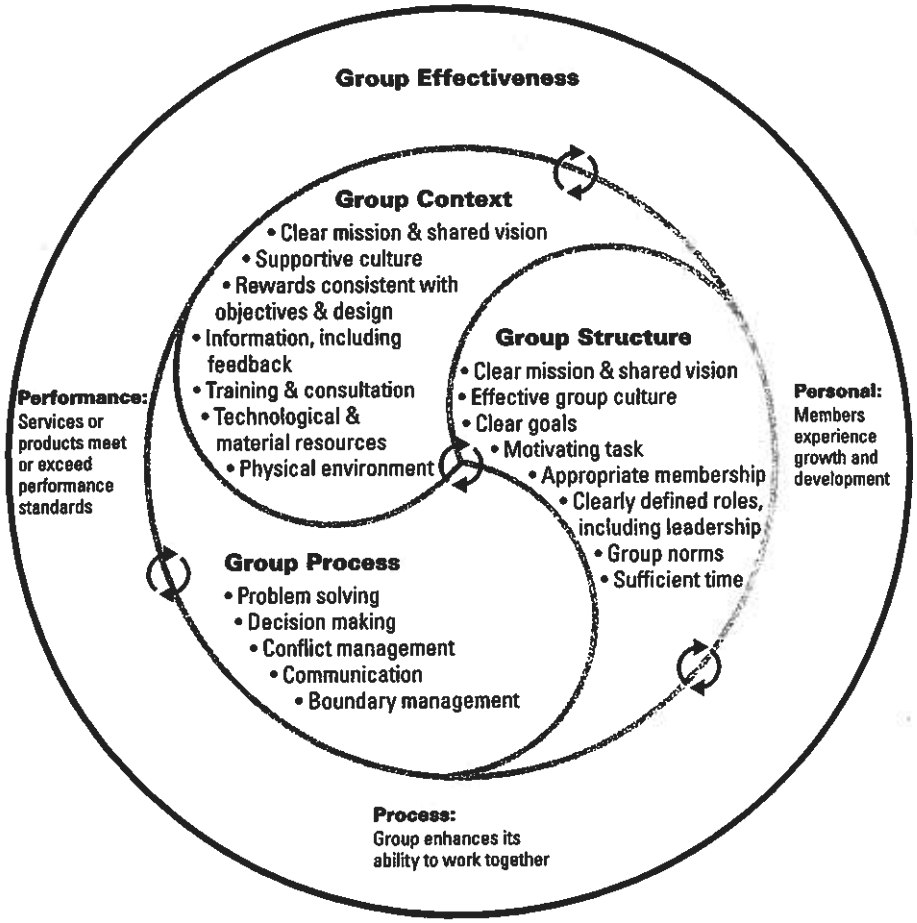


Figure 2.1. Group Effectiveness Model

Source: Adapted from Hackman, 1987, and Sundstrom, De Meuse, and Futtrell, 1990.

WHAT IS A WORK GROUP?

To discuss what makes an effective work group, we need to first consider the term *work group*, which has certain characteristics. First, a work group has a collective responsibility for performing one or more tasks, and the outcome of the tasks can be assessed. The outcome may be a product, service, or decision.

Second, a work group is a social system. It has boundaries that distinguish members from nonmembers; in addition, the members have specific roles and

are interdependent in producing their work. Sometimes, a group is formed from representatives of two or more interdependent groups, as with a cross-functional team or a union-management group. A set of people working on similar but essentially individual tasks is not a work group.

Third, a work group operates in a larger context, which requires managing its transactions with other individuals, with groups, and sometimes with organizations. Examples of groups that have these three characteristics are a board of directors, a task force, or a work team.

In summary, **a work group is a set of people with specific interdependent roles who are collectively responsible for producing some output (service, product, or decision) that can be assessed, and who manage their relationships with those outside the group.** In this definition, what makes a group is the presence of key structural elements rather than the level of motivation or effectiveness of its members. In recent years, many people have used the word *team* to describe what I define as an effective group (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993). In this book, I use the terms *group* and *team* interchangeably, recognizing that either can be more or less effective.

THREE EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA: PERFORMANCE, PROCESS, AND PERSONAL

Before answering the question of what elements contribute to a work group's effectiveness, we need to first consider what it means for a group to be effective. An effective work group meets the three criteria listed in Exhibit 2.1. Rather than simply measure the quality and quantity of the service or product against some objective or internal group standard, the first criterion—*performance*—uses the expectations and satisfaction of the group's customers to determine whether the service or product is acceptable. There are two reasons for this. First, many groups do not have objective standards of performance that can be measured clearly or easily. Second, because the group is a system, the value of its output depends greatly on those outside the group, who either evaluate its performance directly or receive its products or services, more than on any objective performance index alone. This criterion reinforces the idea that a group must respond to the demands of its customers if it is to be effective (Katz and Kahn, 1978; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry, 1990). A group must meet the demands of two types of customer: internal (those inside the organization who either receive the group's work or evaluate its performance) and external (those outside the organization who receive the group's work). The group's own standards for performance are still important, but they do not replace the assessments of others.

The second criterion, which I call *process*, takes into account that most groups work together over an extended period on a series of tasks. Consequently, the

Exhibit 2.1. Three Criteria for Effective Groups

Performance: The services that the group delivers or the products it makes meet or exceed the performance standards of the people who receive it, use it, or review it.

Process: The processes and structures used to carry out the work maintain and preferably enhance the ability of members to work together on subsequent group tasks.

Personal: The group experience contributes to the growth and well-being of its members.

Source: Adapted from Hackman (1987).

processes and structures they use must enable them to work together in a way that enhances their ability to do so in the future. For example, group processes that burn out members or that erode trust among members reduce their capability to work together on subsequent group tasks. Having a process and skills for reflecting on their behavior in order to learn from it becomes an essential tool for meeting the second criterion.

The third criterion, which I call *personal*, is that the group experience contributes to the growth and well-being of its members. Group members reasonably expect that through their work group they can meet some of their personal needs—say, doing work that is important or that makes a difference in others' lives, or the need to feel competent, or the need to learn. The members' needs can also lead them to set their own standards of quality for their service or product. In the long run, a group that does not meet its members' needs is less effective than one that does.

To be effective, the group must meet all three criteria, which are interrelated. For example, consider a group in which members manage conflict such that trust among the members is diminished. This in turn leads members to withhold information from each other. As a result, key information is not available to the full group, and the quality of the service the group produces begins to drop. Finally, members' personal needs for feeling competent suffer as they find themselves part of a group with declining quality and no means of solving the problem. As this example illustrates, if in the long run one criterion is not met, it affects the other two criteria. Groups are not, however, either effective or ineffective; their effectiveness is measured on a continuum of effectiveness.

Three factors contribute to group effectiveness: group process, group structure, and group context (Hackman, 1987; Hackman, 1990). Each factor has a number of elements (Figure 2.1). On the one hand, group process and group structure can be thought of as characteristics of a group. The group context, on the other hand, comprises elements of the larger organization that are relevant to the group's structure and process. The interrelationships among

group process, group structure, and group context are complex. For now, it is sufficient to say that each element can influence the others, as illustrated by the arrows in the diagram. As I will discuss later in this chapter, **facilitators intervene primarily through a group's process and structure, enabling the group to examine and perhaps change its process, structure, and group context.**

GROUP PROCESS

Process refers to *how* things are done, rather than what is done. To be effective, a group must manage a number of processes, which are shaded in Figure 2.2. Two primary group processes are problem solving and decision making.

Problem Solving

Except for a group that has a mission to carry out orders without asking questions or making judgments, problem solving is a central part of any group's activities. A problem is simply a gap between what is desired and what exists. For example, a problem exists when a product is shipped to customers in

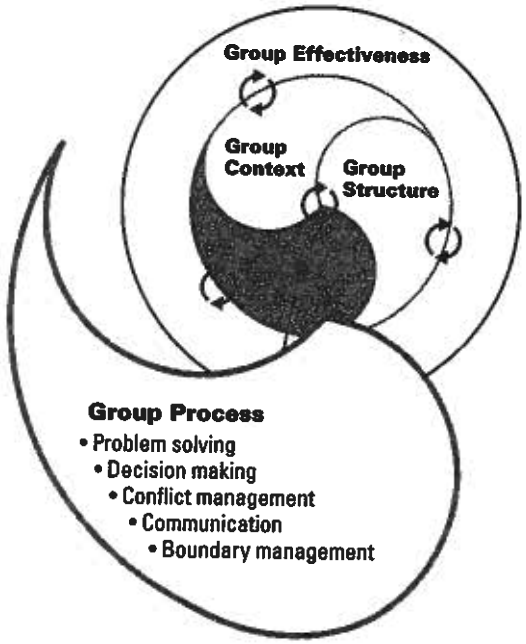


Figure 2.2. Group Process Within the Group Effectiveness Model

ten days when the customers expect the product within three days. Problem solving is the systematic approach a group uses to identify a problem, establish criteria for evaluating potential solutions, collect relevant information, identify the causes of the problem, evaluate and select a solution, implement it, and evaluate it.

A group with an effective problem-solving process meets two conditions. First, members use a systematic process for solving problems that is appropriate for the problem they are trying to solve. This seems obvious, but many groups do not use a systematic approach. Members often begin to solve the problem by suggesting solutions before agreeing on the problem or its causes. Consequently, potential causes are not considered, and the group's solution does not solve the problem. Similarly, if a group does not consider the effect of its solution over time and throughout the system, the members can solve one problem in a way that creates more difficult ones. The second condition for effective problem solving is that all members focus on the same step of the process at the same time. A group gets off track when some members are trying to identify the cause of the problem and other members are already proposing a solution.

Decision Making

Decision making involves reaching a conclusion or making a choice. In a problem-solving process, people think of the decision as the point at which the group selects the best solution from among several choices. But a group makes many decisions in the process of solving a problem, such as how to define the problem and what information should be considered in evaluating solutions. Decision making includes who should be involved when, in what decisions, and how those involved will decide.

In an effective decision-making process, a number of people are involved: those responsible for planning, those responsible for implementing the decision, those affected directly by the decision, and those affected indirectly or who can influence whether or how the solution is implemented. The core values of facilitation state that the group includes people who have the relevant information about the problem and its causes, its solutions, and potential effects.

How should members decide? Groups have various ways of deciding. In some cases, the leader of the group decides alone, with or without consulting other members. In other cases, the leader becomes a member of the group with the same influence (theoretically) as other members. In still other cases, the leader delegates the problem solving to other group members, agreeing to implement any decision they reach, given certain criteria. If more than one person is to make the decision, they need to decide whether they will do so by consensus, majority vote, or some other means. **The core values of facilitation state that a group is more effective if the group is internally committed to its choices.**

Conflict Management

An effective group considers conflict a natural part of group life; if it is managed well, conflict improves members' ability to accomplish their task, work together, and contribute to personal growth. They use conflict to learn more about the problem and how others see it, rather than to simply persuade people that they are right and others are wrong. They assume that others have relevant information they may not have, that others are well intended, and that their own solution may be missing something, instead of assuming that others are uninformed or misinformed and have ulterior motives.

To do this, members share previously hidden thoughts and feelings and openly test any difference of opinion. They can openly disagree without fear of retribution. Unlike a group that avoids conflict to help a member save face, members of an effective group openly confront each other, believing that each person is strong enough to receive negative feedback directly. Ultimately, an effective group resolves conflict so that not only does the conflict remain resolved but also members understand how the conflict arose, how they contributed to it, and how they can act differently to prevent unnecessary conflict (Eiseman, 1978). The core values and ground rules of the Skilled Facilitator approach are central to managing conflict effectively.

Communication

The communication process is embedded in all other group processes. Essentially, communication involves exchanging information such that the sender and receiver understand the meaning in the same way. An effective group communicates in a way that creates valid information. The ground rules and core values of the Skilled Facilitator approach describe elements of effective communication. I refer to several of them here.

To generate valid information, members share not just their opinions and conclusions but also how they arrived at them. In other words, they make their reasoning explicit, by sharing their intent, the assumptions and inferences they made, the information and examples they used, and the logical steps they went through to arrive at a conclusion. They encourage others to identify gaps in their reasoning and ask others to share their own reasoning as well.

Whenever possible, members communicate directly with each other, rather than using an intermediary, to ensure that their meaning has been received as they intended it and to be able to respond to questions and concerns that might arise. In a group meeting, members seek reaction to their comments to focus the conversation and move it forward, avoiding a series of unrelated monologues in which member after member states her or his views.

Members openly express disagreement with any other member, regardless of difference in position or status. The individuals offer specific examples to illustrate a view rather than communicating only in the abstract. For example, a member might say, "We had a problem with inventory. Last Friday, we scheduled assembly of Model 2800 and had only fifteen of the forty primary switches needed for assembly"; contrast this with saying "We had some problems last week scheduling production." If a member makes an inference about another, the person tests out the inference to determine whether it is valid.

In an effective group, members test out their assumptions and inferences to determine if they are valid, rather than simply acting as if they are true. For example, if the leader states that the group needs to focus on a particular project, a member would test his or her inference that the leader also wants them to give lower priority to the other group projects.

Testing inferences applies to nonverbal communication as well. Many books have been written to help in identifying what certain body language means and how to convey things to people (such as how to ask someone to stop talking) without saying anything directly. In an effective group, members communicate directly rather than use nonverbal behavior, which is easily misinterpreted. In some cultures, for instance, putting one's feet on the table is considered disrespectful; I once facilitated a meeting at which one member accused another of not having respect for her because he propped his feet on the table. It turned out that the other member had an illness that required him to keep his legs elevated.

Finally, an effective group deals with undiscussable issues—the important issues, relevant to the group's task—that members often believe they cannot discuss openly in the group without negative consequences.

Boundary Management

An effective work group manages its relationships with the organization by simultaneously differentiating itself and coordinating with the organization. Groups need to establish boundaries in order to function (Schein, 1988). In an effective group, members can articulate the group's task and what they are responsible for accomplishing, so that they do not take on tasks unrelated to their purpose and outside the group's expertise. Similarly, they know what kind of authority and autonomy the group has.

At the same time, a group must coordinate its work with other parts of the organization to produce a service or product. This includes deciding what information to share and how, what tasks each party performs, and how decisions are made. For example, a product design team needs to coordinate its work with marketing and manufacturing teams to determine whether the proposed product design meets customer needs and can be manufactured. A group also needs to manage boundaries to ensure that the larger organization provides the materials, technology, people, and information needed to accomplish the task. Some groups also have to manage boundaries directly with the external customers of the organization.

The Relationship Among Group Processes

Although this chapter discusses each process separately, in reality a group uses many processes simultaneously as its members work together. For example, in solving a problem, a group also makes decisions about who will be involved and manages conflict that arises if members disagree about what to do. Of course, all of the group's conversation is communication. Similarly, when a group manages its boundaries, it also solves problems, manages conflict, and communicates with other parts of the organization or people outside. Segmenting the group's behavior into processes simply helps a facilitator and the group understand more clearly how the group is acting effectively or ineffectively. But because the group is a system, each process is related to the other elements of the model; so any intervention to improve one process needs to take into account the effect on other parts of the model.

How Group Process Increases Group Effectiveness

A group applies its problem-solving, decision-making, and other processes to solve problems associated with the particular services or products for which they are responsible. A group of auto engineers and scientists may use a problem-solving process to determine how to improve the fuel efficiency of a car, while a group of executives may use a problem-solving process to determine how to reduce redundant personnel resulting from a merger.

But groups also use their processes to identify and solve problems that arise from their process, structure, and organizational context. The group's process is the means by which it increases effectiveness. In other words, the group relies on its processes to help identify and solve problems caused by ineffective group structure, organizational context, and even ineffective group process. **In one way, group processes, especially a group's problem-solving process, represent the group's ability to diagnose and intervene on any elements that limit its effectiveness.**

GROUP STRUCTURE

An effective group requires an effective structure. Group structure (shaded in Figure 2.3) refers to the relatively stable characteristics of a group, including mission and vision, tasks, membership, roles each member fills, the time members have available, members' shared values and beliefs, and norms. Unlike the structure of a building or the human body, group structure has no physical counterpart. In fact, group structure is simply a stable, recurring group process that results from members' constantly interacting with each other in certain ways (Allport, 1967). It is the causal relationships among the repeating cycle of activities that create structure. You do not "see" structure directly; you see the

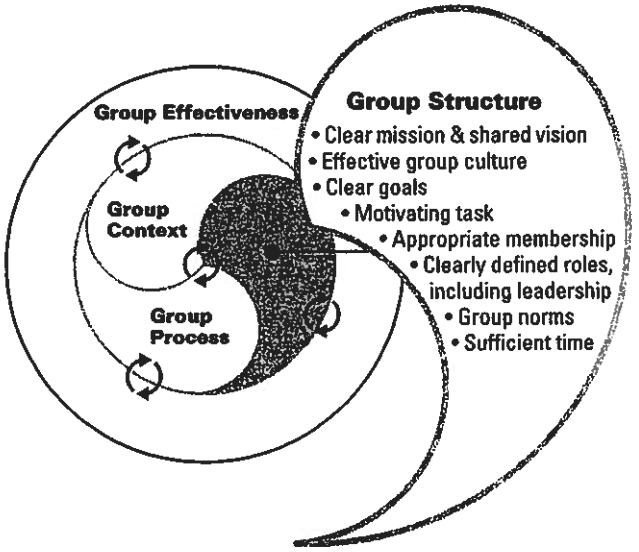


Figure 2.3. Group Structure Within the Group Effectiveness Model

resulting behavior that the structure generates. But understanding the dynamic relationships that create the structure is important because changing the relationships in the activity changes the structure.

Clear Mission and Shared Vision

A group's mission answers the question "Why do we exist?" A group attempts to achieve its mission by accomplishing various goals, which in turn are achieved by performing various tasks. A vision is a mental picture of the future that a group seeks to create. Whereas mission clarifies why the group exists, vision identifies what the group should look like and how it should act as it seeks to accomplish its mission. In an effective group, members can articulate their mission and vision, find it engaging, and use it to guide their work.

Effective Group Culture

Along with mission and vision, group culture embraces the guiding ideas for the group. Group culture is the set of fundamental values and beliefs that members of a group share and that guide their behavior. A belief is an assumption about what is true (for example, "people are naturally motivated to do a good job"). A value is an assumption about what is worthwhile or desirable (for example, "maintaining honesty at all times"). In an effective group, members can articulate the group's core values and beliefs, and they take actions and

make decisions that are consistent with the shared values and beliefs. If a group's culture is consistent with effective management principles, the group can be positively influenced by the culture. For example, a group that values quality service is likely to seek and respond to customer suggestions for improving service. However, if the group's culture is inconsistent with effective management principles, the group can be negatively influenced; if a group believes that conflict is to be avoided or else won rather than seen as an opportunity for learning, then the group is not likely to learn from its own conflict.

I believe the core values of the Skilled Facilitator approach contribute to a culture of effective group process. Unfortunately, groups—and organizations generally—rarely have these core values as part of their culture. You cannot identify a group's culture simply by listening to what members say they value or believe. Members often espouse values and beliefs that are inconsistent with their actions and are often unaware of the inconsistency (Argyris and Schön, 1974). The values and beliefs that constitute the group's culture can be inferred by observing the artifacts of the culture (Schein, 1985), including how members act. An artifact is a product of the culture—a policy, a procedure, or a structure that members create. Inferring values and beliefs is a primary method that developmental facilitators use to help a group examine its process.

Clear Goals

Whether a group sets its own goals or receives them from the larger organization, an effective group has a clear goal that is consistent with the organization's mission and vision and that allows members to select the means by which they achieve the goals. Clear goals enable a group to measure its progress toward achieving them. Without clear goals, a group has difficulty solving problems and making decisions, and this often leads to conflict.

A Motivating Group Task

To claim a real group task, group members must be interdependent with each other in accomplishing the task and share collective responsibility for the group's output. The group's task is the work the group performs to accomplish its goal. However, the task and the goal are not the same. For example, if a goal is to ensure that the public has safe housing, a group may perform the tasks of inspecting dwellings and educating the public. Tasks that motivate group members meet certain conditions (Hackman, 1987):

- The group task requires members to use a variety of their skills.
- The group task is a whole and meaningful piece of work with a visible outcome.
- The outcomes of a group task have significant consequences, either for customers or for others in the organization.

- The group task gives members significant autonomy over how they accomplish the task so that they feel ownership of their work.
- Working on the group task generates regular and trustworthy feedback to group members about how well the group is performing.

Appropriate Membership

An effective group has a membership that is carefully selected according to several criteria. First, the members bring an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills to successfully complete the task. A task force formed to resolve conflict among groups should include a representative of each group to represent that perspective.

Second, the group is just large enough to handle the task. Every additional member requires that the group spend additional time coordinating activities. A group with more members than it needs to complete the task spends time on coordination that could be spent working directly on the task. In addition, as the group grows, members can lose interest in the work and reduce their effort.

Finally, the composition of the group should be stable enough that the group can maintain its continuity of effort, yet be fluid enough to ensure that members do not all think the same way and discourage new or differing ideas. A group that is perpetually losing and replacing members spends much time orienting the new members and learning how to work together (Schwarz, 1991).

The values and beliefs that members bring to the group shape the group's culture and, in turn, how it works. The Skilled Facilitator approach is based on a set of core values that contribute to creating an effective group.

Clearly Defined Roles, Including Leadership

A group comprises individuals filling interdependent roles. In an effective group, members understand clearly what role each member plays and what behavior people expect in each role. In a surgical team, members need to know who directly assists the surgeon, who monitors patient data, who gets supplies, and who handles paperwork. If roles are understood clearly and agreed upon, members can coordinate their actions to complete the task. Without clear, agreed-upon roles, members are likely to experience conflict and stress.

In some groups, each member fills only one role; in others, the members are capable of filling all the roles in the group and often shift roles. An example of the latter situation is seen when members take turns leading the group.

In theory, a position description identifies the set of behaviors expected for that role so that behavior is consistent, regardless of who fills the role. In practice, the role a person plays results from a combination of the formally defined role, the individual's personality, the person's understanding of the role, the expectations that others have for that role, and the interpersonal relationships that

the person has with others in the group (Katz and Kahn, 1978). This means that different people may fill the same role somewhat differently. Consequently, an effective group clarifies its roles as the task changes or as members change.

One key role is that of leader. In an effective group, members understand and support the leader role. Defining this role includes deciding what kinds of decisions the leader is involved in and to what extent; what kinds of group tasks the leader performs; how the leader helps the group obtain resources and manage the boundaries with the larger organization; and how the leader helps group members manage conflict. Defining the leader role means defining the relationship between the leader and other group members regarding how the group handles its processes, structures, and organizational context. How the leader role is filled and whether it is filled by one person or shared by several depends in part on the extent to which the group intends to be self-directed. As a group becomes more self-directed, more elements of the leadership role are integrated into the roles of the members. Chapter Fourteen describes the facilitative leader role in detail.

Group Norms

A norm is an expectation about how people should or should not behave that all or many group members share. Norms stem from the values and beliefs that constitute the group's culture. The ground rules for effective groups are a set of group norms that are based on the core values and beliefs of the Skilled Facilitator approach.

A group can develop a norm regarding anything. It may be that members should help each other when someone is facing a deadline, that members should not talk negatively about the group to non–group members, or that members should not openly question the leader's decisions. Regarding this last norm, if it is shared then they may agree to do things they have concerns about, without understanding the leader's decisions.

Norms are important in integrating members into the group by helping them predict how others will act in a given situation and by constituting a guide for member behavior. Not all group norms help a group become effective, however; a norm might be that "the leader will take responsibility for solving group members' problems," or "don't openly state any concern you have about how the group is working." In addition, a group norm may be different from an individual member's personal view. A member may prefer not to rotate tasks among group members, believing that it reduces efficiency; but he may do so because that is the expectation. In this way, norms also influence conformity.

In an effective group, members explicitly discuss and agree on the norms that they want to guide their group. They also agree to hold each other accountable for following the norms by raising the issue if someone acts in a way that they believe is inconsistent with the norms. When a new member joins the group, it reviews the norms so that the new person does not first learn about them by violating one and being told "that's not the way we do things here." Chapter Five introduces a set of group norms, called ground rules, for effective groups.

Sufficient Time

Obviously, a group needs enough time to complete its tasks and achieve its goals. Specifically, a group needs two kinds of time: performance time and capacity-building time. During performance time, the group produces its product or service. During capacity-building time, the group engages in activities that help build capacity to improve performance. Examples are redesigning the flow of work to increase efficiency, learning to use new software to generate better performance data, or reflecting on how the group managed a conflict so as to improve its skills. Sometimes a group performs and builds capacity simultaneously, as in a facilitated meeting in which members are learning to improve how to productively resolve a real conflict they are currently facing. But if these two modes are mixed, the group's normal rate of performance slows down, in order to ultimately speed it up.

Typically, a group spends too little time on building capacity. An effective group thinks and acts systemically about the relationship between performance time and capacity-building time. The individuals recognize that to perform at a level meeting or exceeding constantly rising external standards, they must devote time to improving their group process and structure; initially, the amount of time they take from performance is more than compensated for later if they choose their capacity-building efforts well. In systems thinking, people refer to this as going slow to go fast.

GROUP CONTEXT

The group context, shown in Figure 2.4, includes aspects of the larger organization that influence the group's effectiveness but that the group usually does not control. An effective group recognizes that, although it may not control the group context, it might influence the larger organization to create a more supportive context. The group seeks to do so, rather than assuming that the larger organization cannot be influenced and that the members are powerless to effect change. Understanding the group context helps a facilitator identify how the larger organization is likely to help or hinder a group's efforts to improve effectiveness. It also helps identify the extent to which facilitation alone can help a group.

A Clear Mission and a Shared Vision

The organization's mission and vision furnish the context for the group's own mission and vision. An effective group understands and shares the organization's mission and vision and makes group decisions consistent with them.

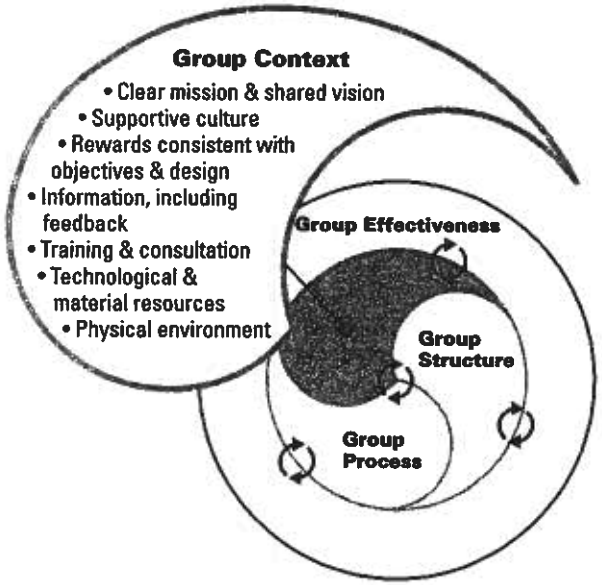


Figure 2.4. Group Context Within the Group Effectiveness Model

Sometimes, a group does not know the organizational mission or vision or does not understand the logic of it. In this situation, an effective group asks others to explain the mission or vision rather than ignoring it or complaining within their group that others have not made it clear.

Supportive Organizational Culture

Group culture refers to the set of values and beliefs that are generally shared by members of a group; *organizational culture* refers to the set of values and beliefs that members of an organization generally share and that guide their behavior. Because each group can have its own culture and because groups differ with respect to function, the professionals it may employ, and the demographic characteristics of the members, a group's culture may differ from the overall culture in the organization.

A group is more effective if the organizational culture is supportive. This means the organizational culture is consistent with effective management principles, including the core values of the Skilled Facilitator approach. Unfortunately, as I noted earlier, organizations rarely hold the core values as part of their culture (Argyris, 1990); altering an organizational culture is perhaps the most difficult kind of change to create. Therefore a strong, ineffective organizational culture can make it difficult for a group to sustain any increase in effectiveness.

Rewards Consistent with Group Objectives and Design

An organization influences groups by rewarding certain behaviors. To create an effective group, the organization rewards behavior that is consistent with the group's objectives. If, for example, a construction crew's objective is to build quality homes, then rewarding the group solely according to the number of homes it builds unintentionally encourages members to increase the reward at the expense of work quality. It would be more consistent with the group's objective to reward members also for the quality of their construction.

Rewarding the group consistently with its design means rewarding the group as a group. If the group task is designed so that it requires the effort of all members, at least part of the reward should be made to the group as a whole. If an organization espouses teamwork and then rewards only individually, it sends a mixed message, undermines credibility, and creates potential conflict among group members that is sure to reduce the group's effectiveness (Kerr, 1975).

A colleague of mine consulted to an organization that gave a financial reward for suggestions that reduced costs. A team submitted a suggestion and won a reward but was told by human resources that the reward could only be given to an individual. The team responded that they had thought of and developed the idea as a team, building on each other's ideas, and could no longer identify which individuals contributed which ideas. Having been required to make what they considered an arbitrary distinction, the group fell into conflict, and performance as a team declined. My point is not that an organization should confer only team rewards to a team (a balance of team and individual rewards seems more congruent), but rather that how the rewards are given should be congruent with how the work was done.

Information, Including Feedback About Performance

An effective group has access to the valid and relevant information needed to perform the work, whether it is information about markets, staffing, production scheduling or costs, or other topics. Similarly, an effective group has access to information about the constraints within which the members must make their own decisions and the effects that the decisions will have on other parts of the organization. A product design group has to know what constraints are placed

on the design and how their design affects the ability to market, engineer, and produce the product. An effective group also solicits and receives feedback about the group's performance, including working relationships with other parts of the organization. This enables the members to continually improve their performance.

Training and Consultation

Effective groups have access to training and consultation to help them increase their knowledge, develop skills, and solve problems necessary to perform tasks. The resources may be task-related, such as learning how to improve the technical accuracy of their work, or process-related, such as learning how to manage conflict within the group.

Technology and Material Resources

Technology is the means by which a group converts or transforms its raw materials into a product or service. A health care team uses medical technology and health education to help sick people become healthy and to keep healthy people from becoming sick. A top management team uses organizational mission and vision, and information about the marketplace and the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, to make strategic choices. Faculty members use various teaching and learning methods to help uneducated students become learned students. Material resources include the tools, supplies, and raw materials needed for the finished product or service. An effective group has access to the materials and technology necessary to accomplish its goals. In particular, computer technology that enables group members to communicate and coordinate their work becomes critical as groups increasingly have members who are not located at the same physical location.

Physical Environment That Fits the Group's Needs

Within the organization, the physical environment refers to where members are physically located and how their physical space is designed. Most of us have experienced the difference between a space that makes working easy and a space that makes it difficult. The same is true for groups. An effective group has a workspace that is designed to meet the demands of the work. This may mean designing space for meetings, private conversation, viewing a large document, easy access to other groups, or other needs. Group members do not necessarily have to be physically located at the same site; in a virtual group the members are in different locations and coordinate their work largely by computer and phone. Still, the physical space in which virtual group members work is designed to meet their needs.

Schwarz [2002]

CHAPTER FIVE

Ground Rules for Effective Groups

In this chapter, I present the ground rules for effective groups, describe what each of the nine ground rules means, and show how you can use them as a group leader, member, or facilitator to help a group become more effective.

USING THE GROUND RULES

As you watch a group in action, you may intuitively know whether their conversation is productive even if you cannot identify exactly how members contribute to or hinder the group's process. **The ground rules for effective groups describe specific behaviors that improve group process.** The ground rules make specific the abstract core values of the Skilled Facilitator approach, the mutual learning theory-in-use, and effective groups.[1] If you are familiar with the set of sixteen ground rules presented in the first edition of *The Skilled Facilitator*, you may want to read Resource A, which explains the relationship between the previous set and the current, smaller set of ground rules (listed in Exhibit 5.1).

What the Ground Rules Do

The ground rules have several purposes. First, **they serve as a diagnostic frame.** By becoming familiar with the ground rules, you can watch a group and identify specifically what is happening that is enhancing or hindering the group's process.

Exhibit 5.1. Nine Ground Rules for Effective Groups

1. Test assumptions and inferences.
2. Share all relevant information.
3. Use specific examples and agree on what important words mean.
4. Explain your reasoning and intent.
5. Focus on interests, not positions.
6. Combine advocacy and inquiry.
7. Jointly design next steps and ways to test disagreements.
8. Discuss undiscussable issues.
9. Use a decision-making rule that generates the level of commitment needed.

Second, **the ground rules guide your behavior as a facilitator.** You use the ground rules to guide your talk and increase your own effectiveness; by modeling the ground rules, you demonstrate how group members can do the same. You also use the ground rules to identify times when group members are acting less effective than they could, and to intervene to help them use the ground rules.

Finally, **the ground rules serve as a learning tool for developing effective group norms.** When a group understands the ground rules and commits to using them, they set new expectations for how the members will interact with each other. This enables the group to share responsibility for improving their process, which is often a goal of developmental facilitation. In other words, you can help groups learn to use the ground rules just as you do: to guide their own behavior and to serve as a diagnostic frame for improving their behavior.

Behavioral Ground Rules

The Skilled Facilitator ground rules may differ from some other ground rules you have seen or used. Some ground rules focus on procedural matters: "we will start on time and end on time," or "turn off pagers and cell phones." Procedural ground rules are useful, but they do not help the group understand what makes for productive conversation. Other sets focus on desired behavior but at a relatively abstract level, such as "treat everyone with respect" or "be constructive." They may create problems if group members differ in their understanding of what behavior is desirable (say, treating people with respect) or if members define terms according to a unilateral control model.

Sometimes facilitators ask me why I do not have the groups I work with develop their own ground rules. They reason that members commit to ground rules they develop and that they can develop useful ones. I have several reasons for introducing a set of ground rules rather than having them created within the group.

First, as a facilitator, I know that groups hire me for my process expertise, which includes knowing what kind of behavior helps a group become more effective. **Because I use the ground rules to diagnose behavior and to intervene, changing the ground rules would also mean changing the types of behavior that I diagnose and intervene on.** Second, **I do not assume that members have to develop the ground rules themselves to be committed to them; rather, I assume that they can be committed to them if they make a free and informed choice to use them.**

Third, in my experience **members are often not able to identify behaviorally specific ground rules**—the kind needed to improve group process. In addition, they sometimes generate ground rules that are designed to unilaterally protect themselves and others and reduce the group's ability to make a free and informed choice.

Finally, **in basic facilitation, a group is reasonably asking the facilitator to manage the process.** Asking a group to develop its own ground rules—behaviorally specific ground rules—takes time and shifts the focus from content to process.

Consequently, I choose to present the ground rules to the group, explain how they work, encourage members to raise questions and concerns they have, and identify any ground rules they think might be missing or need to be changed. (For example, groups often add a ground rule about keeping information confidential.) I use this approach for both basic and developmental facilitation, although in developmental facilitation the group and I spend considerably more time exploring this issue.

If you do choose to ask the group to develop or modify the ground rules, the basic principle is that the rules need to be consistent with the core values if you are to use the ground rules as a basis for diagnosing and intervening in the group.

Contracting to Use the Ground Rules

The ground rules are not the group's ground rules until its members have agreed to use them. There are two choices the group faces with respect to using the ground rules. First, the group needs to decide whether it wants to use me as a facilitator, understanding that a central part of my approach is to use the ground rules to diagnose group behavior and intervene in it. This includes asking group members to use the ground rules when I think doing so improves the process. Second, group members have to decide whether they want to take responsibility for practicing the ground rules themselves and for giving other group members feedback about using them. A group interested in learning to improve its process typically wants to do this. Even if the group as a whole does not choose to take responsibility for using the ground rules, individual members can still choose to do so.

To help the group make these decisions, I talk about the ground rules, how I would use them, what it would mean for them to use the rules, and inquire about concerns that they have about using the rules. This conversation is part of contracting with the group, which I discuss in detail in Chapter Thirteen.

GROUND RULE ONE: TEST ASSUMPTIONS AND INFERENCES

When you assume something, you take for granted that it is true without verifying it. When you infer something, you draw a conclusion about what you do not know on the basis of things that you do know. The effect is the same whether it is an assumption or an inference that goes without testing.

Jim, a group leader, observes that Hank, although productive, has considerably more work than any other group member. To lighten Hank's workload, Jim begins transferring some of Hank's work to other members. One day in a team meeting, Jim says, "Hank, your group's been working really hard and doing good work, but the analyses have been slowing your group down. I'm going to give Donna's group the weekly sales figures to analyze. You won't need to do it."

Hank replies with some sarcasm, "Thanks a lot. We bust our guts to fix others' mistakes, and we end up paying for it."

Jim responds, "You're not paying for it. I appreciate the hard work your group has done. I'm giving you some slack. Now, here's how I'd like to shift the work to Donna. . . ."

Jim has assumed that Hank will know why he is trying to lighten Hank's workload, and Hank incorrectly infers from Jim's statement that Jim is dissatisfied with his work. Furthermore, Jim does not test his assumption with Hank, and Hank does not test his inference with Jim; thus, neither can find out that he is incorrect. Here is how this happens.

The Ladder of Inference

How you make inferences is illustrated in the ladder of inference (Figure 5.1), which I have adapted from Argyris and Schön and from Action Design, which modified Argyris and Schön's work.

Directly Observable Data. In a conversation, you are faced with a lot of directly observable data, including what people are saying and their nonverbal behavior. I think of directly observable data as whatever a video camcorder can record.

Observe and Select Data. You cannot attend to everything, so at the first rung of the ladder of inference you observe and select certain data to pay attention to while ignoring other data. Some of what you choose to pay attention to is

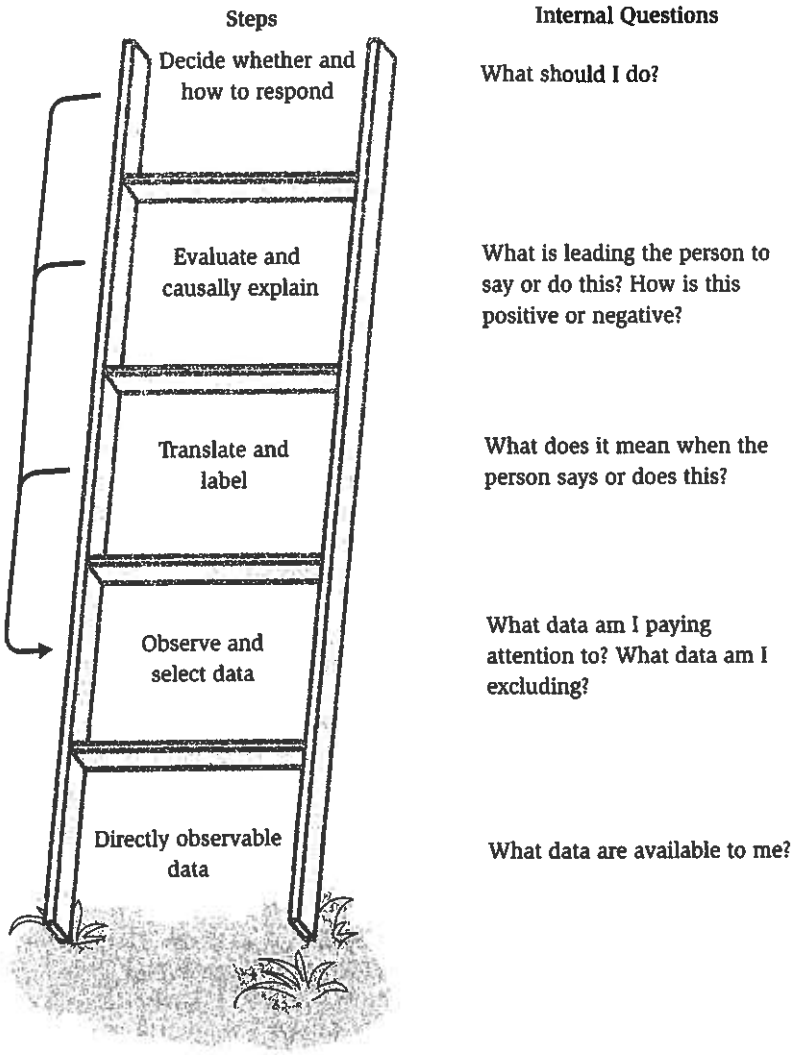
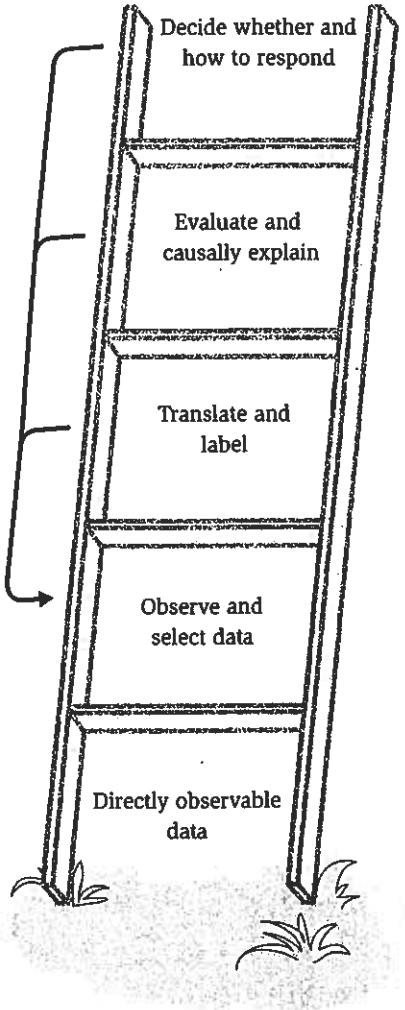


Figure 5.1. The Ladder of Inference

Source: Adapted from Argyris, 1985, and Action Design, 1997.

selected consciously, but much of it happens out of your awareness. In the case of Hank, he pays attention to the part of Jim's comment that says "but the analyses have been slowing your group down. I'm going to give Donna's group the weekly sales figures to analyze." He ignores entirely Jim's comment that "your group's been working really hard and doing good work" (Figure 5.2).



He's already made up his mind, but I still need to let him know it's not fair.

He thinks I can't handle the sales analyses because we were late the last four weeks. It's not my fault that Donna's unit has been giving us data sets full of errors that take two days to clean up. Jim is doing this because he doesn't want to confront Donna with the problem. I'm angry. We get the blame for her group's mistakes.

He's saying that I haven't done the job well and that we're not going to be responsible for the sales analysis anymore. He is taking away part of my job.

Jim said, "The analyses have been slowing your group down. I'm going to give Donna's group the weekly sales figures to analyze."

Jim says, "Hank, your group's been working really hard and doing good work, but the analyses have been slowing your group down. I'm going to give Donna's group the weekly sales figures to analyze. You won't need to do it."

Figure 5.2. Hank's Ladder of Inference

Source: Adapted from Argyris, 1985, and Action Design, 1997.

Translate and Label Data. At the second rung, you begin to infer meaning from the data by translating it into your own words and labeling it. Essentially, you say to yourself, *What does it really mean when this person says or does this?* Hank thinks to himself, *Jim is saying that I haven't managed the job well and that we're not going to be responsible for the sales analysis anymore. He is taking away part of my job.* Notice that in translating and labeling Jim's comment, Hank infers that Jim thinks he has not done the work well, and also that the change is permanent.

Evaluate and Explain. At the third rung, you evaluate and explain what you have translated and labeled at the second rung. Whereas on the second rung you describe what is occurring, on this rung you judge it and create a causal explanation. You ask yourself, *In what way is this positive or negative?* You also ask yourself, *What is leading the person to say or do this?* Hank thinks, *He thinks I can't handle the sales analyses because we were late the last four weeks. It's not my fault that Donna's unit has been giving us data sets full of errors that take two days to clean up. Jim is doing this because he doesn't want to confront Donna with the problem. I'm angry. We get the blame for her group's mistakes.*

Notice that the causal explanation that Hank creates includes an attribution about Jim (that he is doing this because he doesn't want to confront Donna with the problem)—that is, an inference about what is motivating Jim to do this.

Exhibit 5.2. Not Testing Inferences and Assumptions

Hank's Ladder of Inference	The Conversation	Jim's Ladder of Inference
Jim said: "I'm going to give Donna the weekly sales figures to analyze." He's saying that I haven't done the job well and that we're not going to be responsible for the sales analysis anymore. He is taking away part of my job. He thinks I can't handle the sales analyses because we were late the last four weeks. It's not my fault that Donna's unit has been giving us data sets full of errors that take two days to clean up. Jim is doing this because he doesn't want to confront Donna with the problem. I'm angry. We get the blame for her group's mistakes. He's already made up his mind, but I still need to let him know it's not fair.	JIM: Hank, your group's been working really hard and doing good work, but the analyses have been slowing your group down. I'm going to give Donna's group the weekly sales figures to analyze. You won't need to do it.	

Decide How to Respond. On the fourth and final rung, you decide whether and how to respond. Hank decides, "He's already made up his mind, but I still need to let him know it's not fair." Like Hank, you go up the ladder of inference in milliseconds without even being aware that you are doing so.

Of course, while Hank is inferring, so is Jim. In a group conversation, each person makes inferences, and they are going to differ. If you could combine Hank's and Jim's left-hand columns, they might look like Exhibit 5.2. As you can see, Hank makes inferences on the basis of Jim's comment and responds. Jim, in turn, infers from Hank's comment and responds. In this way their conversation arises from an accumulated set of inferences that each makes about the other.

Our Inferences Become Data

The ladder of inference is not linear. You turn the inferences that you make into facts that influence what you observe, and this becomes the basis for further inference. This is called a reflexive loop. For example, Hank will use his inference—that Jim thinks Hank's team can't do the work and that Jim doesn't want

Exhibit 5.2. (*continued*)

Hank's Ladder of Inference	The Conversation	Jim's Ladder of Inference
	HANK: Thanks a lot. We bust our guts to fix others' mistakes and we end up paying for it.	"Thanks a lot?" That's a sarcastic comment. He's complaining when he should be thanking me. Jim just wants to analyze the sales figures because that information puts him in a position of power and he thinks that everyone else makes it difficult for his group to do its work. That's one problem with Jim. But I'm not going to get into that with him. I'll just let it pass and get to the details.
	JIM: You're not paying for it. I appreciate the hard work your group has done. I'm giving you some slack. Now, here's how I'd like to shift the work to Donna. . . .	

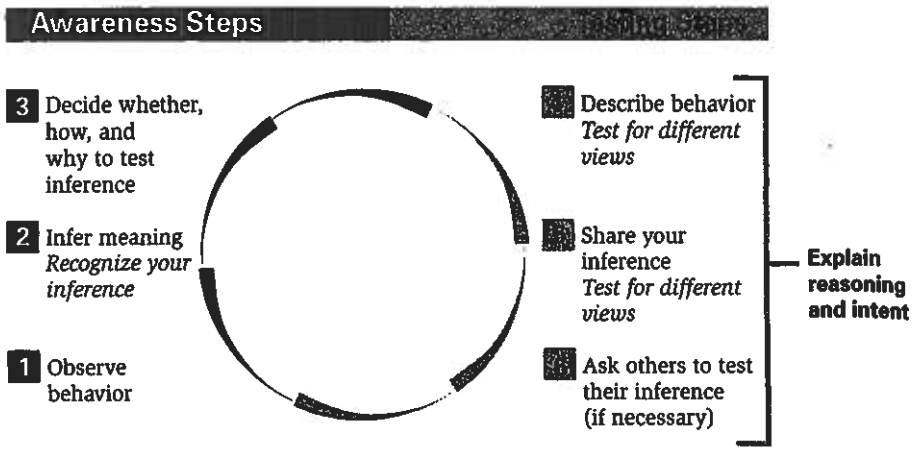


Figure 5.3. Cycle for Testing Inferences and Assumptions

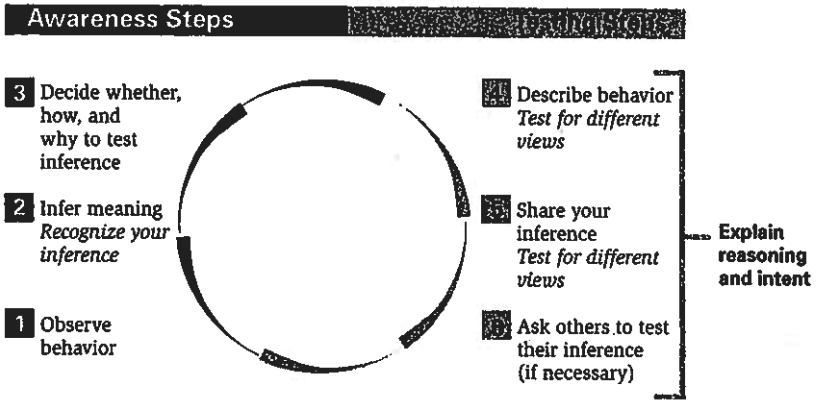
to confront Donna—to systematically select data from future interactions with Jim to confirm his inference. If Jim makes an ambiguous comment, Hank is likely to interpret it as another example of the same. This reflexive loop leads a person to create what he or she *thinks* is a solid basis for a conclusion. In fact, what is created is a large set of untested inferences that may be completely flawed.

It happens quickly. It takes just milliseconds to make an inference. You do it throughout the day and act without being aware of doing so. The problem is not that you make inferences; you must do that to make sense out of what people are saying. Rather, it is how you make inferences and what you do with them. First, **you are usually unaware that you are making inferences,** so you consider them facts rather than hypotheses. Second, **the inferences you make are often high-level inferences,** greatly removed from the data you have. Therefore, there is a logical gap in the steps of reasoning, which you are typically unaware of. For example, if someone disagrees with what you are proposing, you may make a high-level inference that the person is trying to undermine your plan, rather than a low-level inference that the person's needs are not being met by your plan. Third, **you do not test out with the people about whom you are making an inference whether it is accurate; you simply act on it as if it is true.** Consequently, you take action on the basis of an inference that may not be valid.

Testing Your Inferences and Helping Others Test Theirs

Testing inferences generates valid information that you can use to make informed choices. The cycle for testing inferences and assumptions (see Figure 5.3) describes the steps for using the ground rule.

Figure 5.4. Testing Inferences and Assumptions



3 I'm going to test my inference because if we don't have a common understanding of the situation, we will not be able to solve the problem.

2 I'm inferring that the cause of the problem is Donna's group, and I'm also inferring that Jim thinks the cause of the problem is my group.

1 Jim says, "Hank, you have been working really hard and doing good work, but the analyses have been slowing your group down. I'm going to give Donna the weekly sales figures to analyze. You won't need to do it."

4 "Jim, I want to check out a couple of inferences I made. I think you just said that the analyses have been slowing my group down and that you are going to give Donna's group the weekly sales figures to analyze. Do you remember it differently?" [*if Jim remembers it the same way, Hank continues*]

5 "From what you've said, I'm inferring that you think the sales analyses were late because of my group. Is that what you are thinking, or am I off?"

6 [*not needed*]

Figure 5.4 shows how Hank could use the cycle to test his inferences with Jim.

Steps one through three are awareness steps; they are private thoughts. In step one, Hank observes Jim's behavior, namely the words he says to Hank, his tone of voice, and his nonverbal behavior. In step two, Hank infers that the cause of the problem is Donna's group; he infers that Jim thinks the cause of the problem is Hank's group. In step three, Hank decides to test these inferences because a common understanding of the situation is necessary in order to solve the problem. Hank tests the inference with Jim by using the rest of the cycle.

Steps four through six are the testing steps. They are public—that is, they are spoken. In step four, Hank begins by stating his intent, describing the behavior

he sees that leads him to make an inference, and checks to see whether Jim remembers the behavior differently. Hank says, "Jim, I want to check out a couple of inferences I made. I think you just said that the analyses have been slowing my group down and that you are going to give Donna's group the weekly sales figures to analyze. Do you remember it differently?" If not, Hank moves to step five and says, "From what you've said, I'm inferring that you think the sales analyses were late because of my group. Is that what you are thinking, or am I off?" If Jim says he does make that inference, Hank has tested his inference and found it accurate. If Jim says that he does not think Hank is the cause of the problem, Hank finds out that his inference is inaccurate.

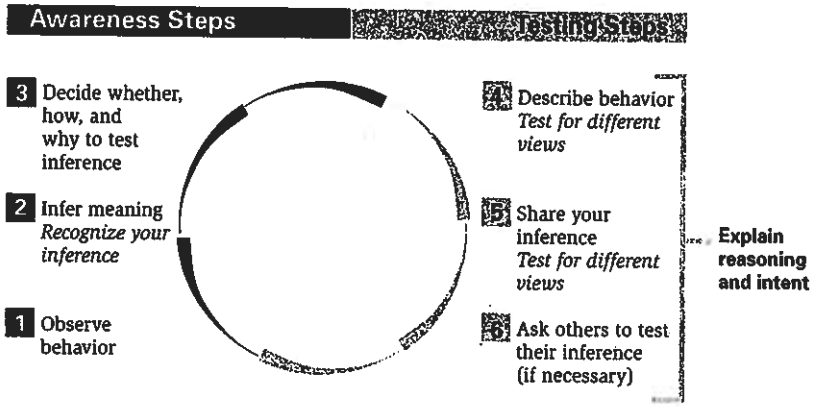
In this example, Hank does not need step six of the cycle. He would use it if Jim made an inference about someone other than Hank. In that case, Hank would say, "Jim, would you be willing to check with Allen to see if your inference is accurate?" Step six is used to ask the person if he or she is willing to test out an inference about someone other than the person who is asking for a test of the inference. Hank doesn't need to use this step because he is testing out an inference that Jim has made about him.

If Hank does not test his inference, the facilitator can intervene to ask him to do so. Figure 5.5 shows the steps of an intervention.

Again, steps one through three are awareness steps and are private thoughts. Assume you are the facilitator. In step one, you observe Hank's behavior, which comprises the words he says to Jim, his tone of voice, and his nonverbal behavior. In step two, you infer from his saying "thanks a lot," and from the rest of his comment, that he thinks he would not be slowing down if others were not making mistakes, and that he has inferred that Jim does not understand this. In step three, you decide to test your inference because if correct then it is important that Hank find out whether Jim understands it as Hank does. You decide to test the inference with Hank using the rest of the cycle.

Steps four through six are the testing steps; you make them public. In step four, you begin by stating your intent, describing the behavior you see that leads you to make your inference, and check to see whether Hank remembers the behavior differently: "Hank, I'd like to check something out. I think you said, 'Thanks a lot. We bust our guts to fix others' mistakes and we end up paying for it.' Did I get that?" If Hank does not remember it differently, you can move to step five and say, "From what you said, I infer that you're thinking your group wouldn't be in this situation if others hadn't made mistakes, and that you have inferred Jim doesn't understand that. Are my inferences off track?" If Hank says that he does make that inference, you can move to step six and say, "Would you be willing to check your inferences with Jim to see whether he understands it differently from you?" Assuming Hank agrees, you have completed the cycle. As Hank tests out his inference with Jim, you use the cycle to decide whether Hank may be making other untested inferences.

Figure 5.5. Intervening on Testing Inferences and Assumptions



3 I'll intervene on this because if my inference is correct, then it is important that Hank test his inference with Jim to see if he understands it differently.

2 I'm inferring from Hank's tone of voice when he says "Thanks a lot" and from the rest of his comment that he thinks he would not be slowing down if others had not made mistakes and that he has inferred that Jim does not understand that.

1 Jim says, "Hank, you have been working really hard and doing good work, but the analyses have been slowing your group down. I'm going to give Donna the weekly sales figures to analyze. You won't need to do it." Hank says, "Thanks a lot. We bust our guts to fix others' mistakes and we end up paying for it."

4 "Hank, I'd like to check something out. I think you said, 'Thanks a lot. We bust our guts to fix others' mistakes and we end up paying for it.' Did I get that?" [*if the answer is yes, continue*]

5 "From what you said, I infer that you're thinking your group wouldn't be in this situation if others hadn't made mistakes and that you have inferred that Jim doesn't understand that. Are my inferences off track?" [*if inference is accurate, continue*]

6 "Would you be willing to check your inferences with Jim to see whether he understands it differently from you?"

As a facilitator, you also use the cycle to test any inference that you think others are making about you and your facilitation. Whether you are a facilitator or a group member, **when using any of the ground rules, you do not have to use the words *infer* and *inference*.** If these words sound unnatural or like jargon, you can say, "I'm thinking that . . . ," "It sounds to me like . . . ," or something similar.

The Diagnosis-Intervention Cycle

Earlier I distinguished between using the ground rules myself and helping group members use them. When I intervene with group members, I use the diagnosis-intervention cycle (see Figure 5.6). It is a structured way to diagnose

behavior and then to intervene. It is essentially a generic version of the cycle for testing inferences and assumptions. The inference testing cycle is designed to test inferences that you or others are making. The diagnosis-intervention cycle is designed to test your inferences that others are not using one or more of the ground rules. Because testing inferences is one of the ground rules, you can use the diagnosis-intervention cycle for testing inferences and assumptions (as I illustrate in Chapter Nine). Like the testing cycle, the diagnosis-intervention cycle has two sides: diagnosis and intervention.

I use the diagnosis side of the diagnosis-intervention cycle to observe the group conversation, infer which ground rules members are not employing that they could benefit from using, and decide whether to intervene in the group to help them use the ground rule. I use the intervention side of the cycle to explain the intent of my intervention, share what I observe, test my inference that they are not using a ground rule that would be helpful, and ask them if they are willing to use the ground rule.

In Chapters Six through Eight, I explain in detail how to use each step of the diagnosis-intervention cycle. I have briefly introduced it here so that I can show you examples of interventions you can make when you want to help group members use each ground rule.

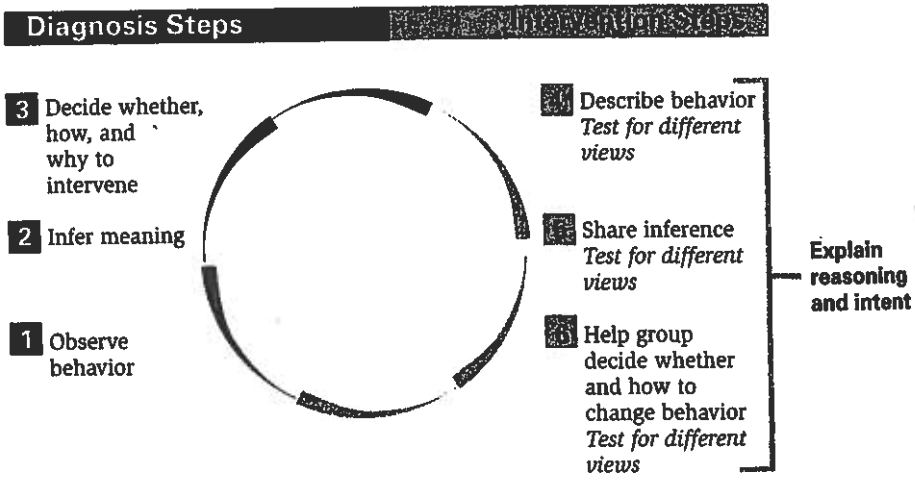


Figure 5.6. The Diagnosis-Intervention Cycle

GROUND RULE TWO: SHARE ALL RELEVANT INFORMATION

Ground rule two means that each member shares all the relevant information she or he has that affects how the group solves a problem or makes a decision. Sharing relevant information ensures that members have a common base of information on which to make an informed choice and generate commitment. If people make a decision and later find out that others have withheld relevant information from them, they feel they were prevented from making an informed choice; sometimes they withdraw their agreement. Even if they do not, they may implement the agreement with little commitment.

Sharing relevant information includes whatever does not support your preferred position. For example, a top management team of a small consumer goods company is deciding how to restructure its organization and move into a new facility. Sandra, the head of one manufacturing process, wants very much to maintain her role. Yet she also knows that in the new facility a number of manufacturing processes could easily be merged for greater efficiency. Here, sharing all relevant information means telling the group about the benefit, even though doing so may reduce her chance of achieving the role she wants.

Group members' feelings are also relevant information to share. For example, a member of an organizational development (OD) group in a global financial services organization is frustrated because he believes his manager is assigning him work that is not within his responsibility. At the same time, he is reluctant to raise this issue because of concern that the manager thinks he isn't a team player. In this case, sharing all relevant information includes the OD person saying something like, "I want to talk with you about some concerns I have about being given the white paper to write. But I'm also concerned that you may think it's inappropriate for me to question being given the assignment. So I'd like to check that out before we talk about the work. Is that OK?"

In a difficult conversation, there is often a large gap between what you say and what is in your left-hand column. You are likely to talk about the content or substantive issue and keep unexpressed your thoughts and feelings regarding the people you are having the conversation with. It is relevant to share both types of information, in part because your feelings about others affect how you view the content of the conversation.

Exhibit 5.3 illustrates how you withhold relevant information. Consider a conversation between Ted and Paula, in which she is trying to get him to understand that he has been ineffective in presenting a project proposal to the senior management team.

Notice all the relevant information in Paula's left-hand column that she does not share with Ted. The point is not that she should share her thoughts and feelings exactly as they appear on the left. As we saw in Chapter Four, this would

Exhibit 5.3. Withholding Relevant Information

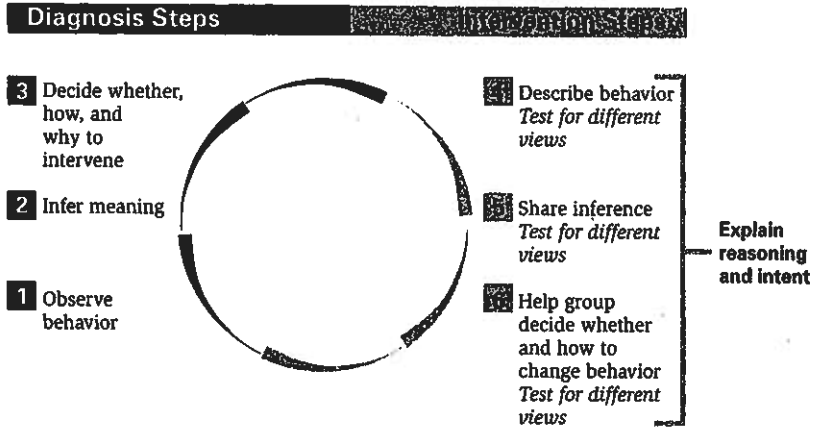
Paula's Thoughts and Feelings	The Conversation
I thought it was abysmal; I wanted to crawl under my chair at the meeting. I had three others tell me it was a waste of their time.	PAULA: How do you think the presentation to the senior management team went yesterday?
Does he really believe it went OK, or is he just trying to put a good spin on it? Nitpicky! You couldn't answer some basic cost questions.	TED: I think it went OK, although there were some rough spots. Some of those execs can really get nitpicky.
I don't understand why you didn't emphasize the need for the project. The team won't approve a project if they can't get answers to some basic questions.	PAULA: We've got some really important reasons for doing it. Do you think the team will support the project now, or do you think maybe we need to give them more answers?
I don't want to wait while this project dies on the vine. Besides, my reputation is at stake here, too.	TED: I think we're in OK shape. A couple of the members came up to me afterward and said they appreciated the presentation. I think we should just wait and see.
I hope the team doesn't think I'm responsible for your not having the answers to those questions. Why didn't you use the information I gave you? I've got to get you to understand what you've done.	PAULA: Maybe, but I think we might want to give them some more information.

be inconsistent with many of the other ground rules. To be effective, Paula should share the relevant information by using the other ground rules (such as testing assumptions and inferences, and using examples).

To share some relevant information in her left-hand column, she might say, "Ted, I have some concerns about the presentation you did yesterday. I'd like to give you some specific examples about what concerned me and get your reaction. OK?" Assuming Ted agrees, Paula continues, "One thing that concerned me was that when Tanya asked you what the cost savings would be, you said you hadn't calculated them. Do you remember it differently?"

If Paula does not share the relevant information, you can intervene to ask her for it. Obviously, you cannot directly observe Paula's private thoughts and feelings to make your intervention, but you do not need to. Figure 5.7 shows how to intervene using the diagnosis-intervention cycle.

Figure 5.7. Intervening on Sharing Relevant Information



3 I'll intervene on this because Paula has not shared the information she is talking about.

2 I'm inferring that Paula has some information to share that leads her to ask her question and has some specific ideas of how Ted could have given them more information.

1 Paula said, "How do you think the presentation went today? . . . Maybe, but I think we might want to give them some more information."

"Paula, a minute ago I think you said a couple of things to Ted: 'How do you think the presentation went today?' 'Maybe, but I think we might want to give them some more information.' Did I get it accurately?" [*if yes, continue*]

"When you said that to Ted, I thought you had your own views about how the presentation went and had an idea about some information that he could have shared. Was my thought correct?" [*if yes, continue*]

"Would you be willing to share that information with Ted?"

GROUND RULE THREE: USE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES AND AGREE ON WHAT IMPORTANT WORDS MEAN

Using specific examples and agreeing on what important words mean is one way of sharing relevant information that generates valid data. Specific examples use directly observable data to name people, places, things, or events. Unlike a general statement, a specific example yields valid information because it enables other members to determine independently whether the example is valid.

For example, if Henry makes the general statement to the group, "I think some of us are not doing their share of the work," other members cannot

determine whether the statement is valid. Members cannot observe who "some of us" are; neither can they directly observe whether someone is "not doing their share of the work." As a result, the people Henry is referring to may incorrectly infer that he is not talking about them, and the people that he is not referring to may incorrectly infer he *is* talking about them. In contrast, if he states specifically, "Selina and Joe, you did not complete and distribute your section of the report," other members can determine whether the statement is valid by directly observing whether Selina and Joe's section of the report is complete and has been distributed.

Some group members and facilitators have a concern about naming names in the group. They follow the principle to "praise in public, criticize in private." Unfortunately, following this principle prevents sharing valid information. If Joe and Selina's not completing their report section creates a problem for other group members, and if Henry pulls Joe and Selina out of the meeting to share his concern, the other group members do not get a chance to directly share their own concern and Joe and Selina do not get a chance to talk about how others' work habits may have contributed to their not completing their section. Talking to Joe and Selina in private essentially removes the data from the system (the group) in which it arose, which increases the chance of the problem being solved in a way that contributes to more problems in the system.

Of course, the principle of praising in public and criticizing in private has a unilateral control set of assumptions embedded in it: discussing your concerns about others' behavior is criticism. As you shift toward a mutual learning approach, you begin to think of these situations as an opportunity to learn something you may have missed or to help the group understand how together they may have acted in a way that makes sense individually but creates unintended consequences at the group level.

Another way to think about specific examples is that they help people agree on what important words mean. When a member unintentionally agrees or disagrees with another, it is often because the same word means different things to them. Suppose a group decides to make decisions by consensus. To some members, the word means that a mere majority of people support it, while to others it means unanimous support. The first time the group makes a decision that has majority (but not unanimous) support, it will learn that it has not agreed on the meaning of consensus.

One way to determine whether all group members are using a word to mean the same thing is to ask them the first time the word is used. You can say, "You used the word *consensus*. To me, consensus means unanimous support and not majority support. In practice, this means everyone in the group can say that they will implement the decision, given their role. It doesn't mean that people are silent about their concerns. It does mean saying something like, 'Even though I have these concerns, I support the decision to implement it.' How does your

definition differ, if at all?" Notice that giving an example is part of describing what a word means, and that it helps also to give an example of what it does not mean.

To think about how to use this ground rule, consider a real conversation, which took place in a publishing company (Exhibit 5.4). Sarah is a senior editor; Linda is the director of sales. Sarah is expressing concern about the design of a book jacket.

Notice that Sarah describes the book jacket in such general terms as "too flashy and blah," "not simple and more sophisticated," "dated and old." She does not illustrate what elements of the book jacket lead her to describe it in these terms. Linda, by contrast, does focus on specific examples when she asks, "What if we changed the type?" However, Sarah responds simply by saying it's a start and then suggests that if the type change doesn't work she will look for ways to "tweak this"; but again she does not give an example of what she means by tweaking. Without hearing Sarah explain what she has observed that leads her to describe the book as too flashy and blah, Linda cannot decide whether she sees it differently; nor can she decide whether she thinks she should talk to the designer about it.

To use this ground rule, Sarah could say, "Let me give you a couple of examples of what I mean by too flashy, and get your reaction. The fonts are all uppercase, in primary colors, and the letters are shadowed in a contrasting color. Is there anything I've said so far that's unclear about what I mean by flashy?"

If Sarah does not share specific examples, you can intervene to ask her to do so. Figure 5.8 shows how to intervene using the diagnosis-intervention cycle.

GROUND RULE FOUR: EXPLAIN YOUR REASONING AND INTENT

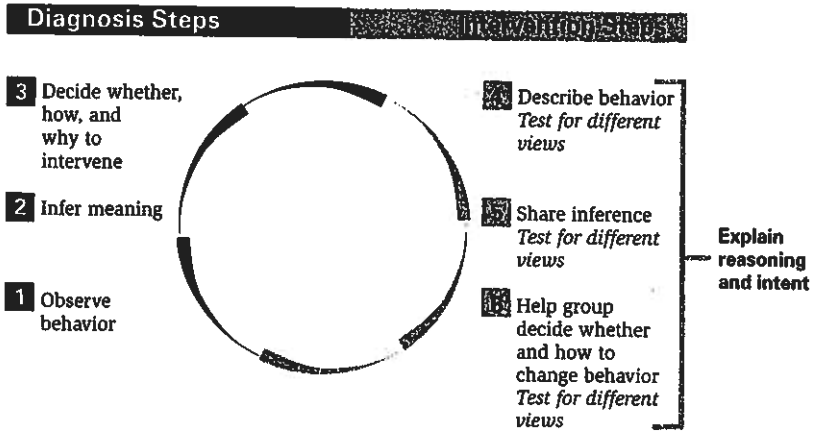
If you do not explain your reasoning, the people you are talking with will often generate their own explanation of your reasoning, and their explanations may differ greatly from your own explanation. **Using this ground rule means explaining to others what leads you to make a comment or ask a question or take an action.** Reasoning and intent are similar but different. Your intent is your purpose for doing something. Your reasoning—like the ladder of inference—represents the logical process that you use to draw conclusions on the basis of data, values, and assumptions.

Explaining your reasoning and intent includes making your private reasoning public, so that others can see how you reached your conclusion and can ask you about places in your reasoning where they may reason differently. This includes making transparent your strategy for managing the conversation. In a unilateral control approach, explaining your reasoning is a problem because it enables others to point out flaws in your reasoning, which reduces the chance

Exhibit 5.4. Not Using Specific Examples or Agreeing on What Important Words Mean

Sarah's Thoughts and Feelings	The Conversation
Be open and friendly; do not attack. Dear God, I can't sleep because of this hideous design.	SARAH: Linda, I know you feel like this design is fine for the book, but I have big reservations. I think we need a new design.
I knew she would blow up—but I detect an opening here. . . . Her words sound inflamed, but she seems to know I have to be on board.	LINDA: WHAT?! I thought you liked this! What are you talking about? What's wrong with it? It's fine!
Yeah, I screwed up. I should have known. But you and the design director are the supposed experts here, and you're blowing it! This project deserves the best, and this is just not it yet. I'm worried that even if we go back to the drawing board, it won't get better. But it can't get worse . . . can it?	SARAH: I know. I think at the beginning I felt we were going through a few rounds of design . . . and in retrospect I should have probably axed them immediately . . . but I thought I was letting the process run its course. I'll tell you honestly, I feel very strongly about this—I think we need to go back to the drawing board. I think we should hire a completely new designer.
Hmm, she is opening up. I was afraid there would be little room to negotiate; was I overly afraid?	LINDA: What don't you like about it?
She is trying to work with it—a good sign, and her tone has come down a few notches. Good. But she is trying to work within the design. . . . I still think we need to throw it out.	SARAH: Well, it's too flashy and blah. It does not have the feel of the book . . . simple and more sophisticated. It feels dated and old. The design is not modern—it says this book is nothing new—and it's new and exciting.
	LINDA: What if we changed the type?
Can't we just send this out, damn it?!	SARAH: Well, that's a start. I think we may want to farm it out to a new designer. If that doesn't work, then I'd be willing to look at ways to tweak this.

Figure 5.8. Intervening on Using Specific Examples and Agreeing on What Important Words Mean



3 I'll intervene on this because Sarah and Linda are each unlikely to understand how the other is thinking about the jacket unless they get to specifics.

2 I'm inferring that Sarah has not been specific in describing what makes the jacket seem flashy and blah to her.

1 Sarah said, "Well, it's too flashy and blah."

4 "Sarah, I think you described the jacket in a number of ways. One of the things you said was that it was 'blah and flashy.' Did I get that?" *[if yes, continue]*

5 "When you said that to Linda, I inferred that you had specific examples of how the jacket was blah and flashy, but I didn't hear them. Have I inferred correctly?" *[if yes, continue]*

6 "Can you give Linda some specific examples of how it's blah and flashy?"

that you can win in the discussion. Instead, your reasoning often seeps out indirectly, sometimes in the form of a cheap shot, in which you indirectly surface your concern by making an oblique or sarcastic comment. In the unilateral control model, making your strategy transparent is a problem because your strategy is to be unilaterally controlling; sharing your strategy reduces your ability to implement it.

In a mutual learning Skilled Facilitator approach, explaining your reasoning and making your strategy transparent are opportunities to learn where others have differing views or approaches and where you may have missed something that others see. Sharing your intent to unilaterally control others reduces your chance of accomplishing it; in contrast, sharing your mutual learning intent is likely to increase your ability to accomplish that purpose.

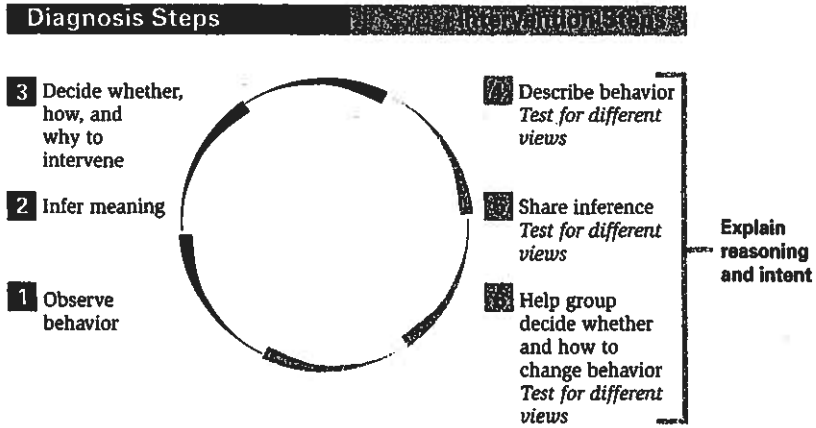
Exhibit 5.5. Not Explaining Your Reasoning and Intent

Leslie's Thoughts and Feelings	The Conversation
OK, that's your starting position. Let's see what options we can work out.	JACK: I really need a full-time person dedicated to this project.
Boy, it would really help me and my resources if this can wait. How time-critical is it?	LESLIE: How soon will it start? Can it wait two months until next quarter?
Well, if you don't find anybody, you'll sure have to wait, won't you?	JACK: The project's got to be worked on right away. I can't wait any longer than I already have.
Let's see if I can buy some time for me and still get some of the project done for him.	LESLIE: Well, I know one of your people has the experience for this; how about if she works on it part-time until next quarter?
People don't always get to do what they want to.	JACK: I don't think she wants to do that. In fact, I'm pretty sure she really wants to work on my other projects.
OK, what if we spread the hit across multiple people instead of creaming just one?	LESLIE: Couldn't we have more people work on smaller pieces of the project instead of just one person?
Strike two.	JACK: No, I don't think that would work out.
Let's look at the data. Is this project really documented well enough that Jim's reasoning stands up?	LESLIE: Can we look at the Gantt chart to see? Maybe there are specific topics that can be dealt out.
Geez, here we go again. What's the deal with him?	JACK: No, I don't think this project would work well without a dedicated person; something might drop through the cracks.

Exhibit 5.5 shows a real conversation between Jack and Leslie, two managers in a semiconductor corporation, in which Jack is asking for some of Leslie's people to work on a project he directs. Jack wants one person full-time; Leslie wants to give Jack several people at less than full time to work on the several parts of his project.

To share her reasoning and intent, Leslie can say something like, "Jack, the reason I'm asking you if you can wait until next quarter is that I have a project due next month, and I need input from all of my staff to complete it. Giving you a person full-time will make it difficult for me to complete the project."

Figure 5.9. Intervening on Sharing Your Reasoning and Intent



3 I'll intervene on this because Jack can't help it if he doesn't know what's leading Leslie to ask him the questions.

2 I'm inferring that Leslie has reasons for asking Jack these questions that she has not yet shared.

1 Leslie asked, "How soon will it start? Can it wait two months until next quarter?" and "Couldn't we have more people work on smaller pieces of the project instead of just one person?"

"Leslie, I think you asked Jack, 'How soon will it start?' 'Can it wait two months until next quarter?' and 'Couldn't we have more people work on smaller pieces of the project instead of just one person?' Yes?" [*if yes, continue*]

"When you asked Jack that, I was thinking that you had reasons for asking about changing the time frame and the number of people, but I didn't hear them. Was my thinking correct?" [*if yes, continue*]

"Would you be willing to share your reasoning with Jack?"

If Leslie does not share her reasoning and intent, you can intervene to ask her to do so. Figure 5.9 shows how.

GROUND RULE FIVE: FOCUS ON INTERESTS, NOT POSITIONS

Focusing on interests is another way of sharing relevant information. **Interests, we have seen, are the needs and desires that people have in regard to a given situation** (Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 1991; Graham, 1995). Solutions or positions are how people meet their interests. In other words, people's interests lead them to advocate a particular solution or position.

Identify Interests

An effective way for members to solve problems is to begin by sharing their own interests. Unfortunately, many groups begin by talking about solutions or positions. For example, if the group is trying to solve the problem of when to meet, one member may start by saying, "I suggest we meet every other Monday at 7:30 A.M." Another may respond, "I think that we should meet the second day of each month." Their positions do not help the group identify each member's real needs, desires, and concerns. Here, the person who suggested meeting every other Monday at 7:30 A.M. is interested in meeting early in the morning, before some important clients call. The person who wants to meet the second day of each month is interested in meeting immediately after a relevant biweekly report is made available. Each takes a position that meets his or her individual interest.

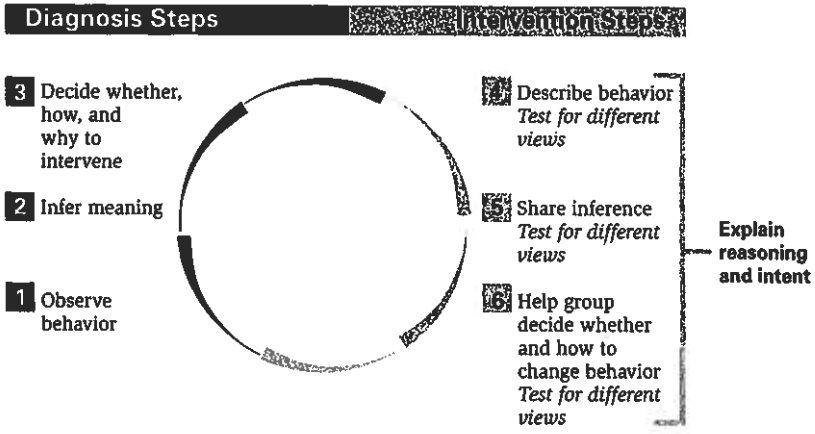
The trouble with solving a problem by focusing first on positions is that people's positions are often in conflict even when their interests are compatible. This occurs because people tend to offer their position after they have attended to their own interests, but before they have included the other members' interests. In the meeting example, each member's solution is rejected by the other because it fails to meet the other's interest. However, if each member is aware of the other's interest, either one may be able to offer a solution that satisfies both.

One way to think about interests is as criteria that need to be met in order to solve the problem in a way that people support. To help the group focus on interests rather than positions, you can begin by asking each member to list the criteria that must be met for that member to accept a solution. Take a simple example of a group buying a car. One member is interested in a car that can hold all six group members, so that they can work together as they travel. Another is interested in a car that uses fuel efficiently, while a third member is interested in a car that requires little expense for maintenance. Notice that none of these interests specifies a particular make and model of car (position). If a member states a position ("I want to buy a Grand Caravan"), then this can be identified as a position and the person can be asked, "What is it about the Grand Caravan that leads you to suggest that as a solution?"

In the conversation between Leslie and Jack, both focus on positions. Jack's position is that he needs a full-time person immediately; Leslie's position—which she does not state directly—is that she can only give people part-time and beginning only next quarter. Neither explains the need he or she faces that has led to offering a particular solution.

Jack could share his interests by saying, "Leslie, I have a need for the kind of project support that will ensure that all the tasks are accomplished with a minimal amount of coordination among my project staff."

Figure 5.10. Intervening by Focusing on Interests, Not Positions



3 I'll intervene on this because Jack and Leslie seem to be at a stalemate.

2 I'm inferring that Jack has a set of interests underlying his positions that he has not shared. They may be to minimize the amount of coordination and ensure that all the tasks are covered.

1 Jack has said, "I really need a full-time person dedicated to this" and "No, I don't think this project would work well without a dedicated person; something might drop through the cracks."

4 "Jack, I think you said that you need a full-time person dedicated to the project and that without it something might drop through the cracks. Did I miss anything?" [*if no, continue*]

5 "I'm inferring that you have some particular needs that lead you to suggest your solution, but I didn't hear them. Have I inferred correctly?" [*if yes, continue*]

6 "Can you say what it is about having a full-time person that is important to you?"

If Jack does not share his interests, you can intervene, as Figure 5.10 illustrates.

Craft a Solution That Meets Interests

After all members have shared their interests, you can check to see whether group members are willing to generate solutions that take into account all the interests identified. If members identify some interests that they believe should not be considered in generating solutions, then you can ask them to share their reasoning. Once the members agree to the set of interests, they can begin to generate solutions or positions. In the car example, a solution is to name specific cars (Ford Taurus, Dodge Caravan). When offering a solution, it helps

to have the person identify how the solution meets the interests on which the group members have agreed.

GROUND RULE SIX: COMBINE ADVOCACY AND INQUIRY

Combining advocacy and inquiry means expressing your point of view, which includes sharing your reasoning and intent and then inviting others to inquire into your comments (Argyris and Schön, 1974). For example, a group member might say, "I think it would help to give division heads their own budgets to work within, so that their accountability will be commensurate with their responsibility. Here's the reasoning that led me to suggest this. [Explains reasoning] I'd like to hear what each of you thinks about this idea. What are your thoughts? What, if anything, do you see differently?"

What Combining Advocacy and Inquiry Accomplishes

Combining advocacy and inquiry accomplishes several goals. First, it shifts a meeting from a series of monologues to a focused conversation. In some meetings, one person speaks after the other, but no one's comments seem to directly address the previous person's. This happens partly because when one person finishes talking, he or she does not invite others to inquire. Without an explicit invitation to inquire or comment on the previous person's remarks, the meeting switches focus with each person who speaks.

Second, combining advocacy and inquiry creates conditions for learning. When you share your reasoning and then ask others to inquire into it, they can determine for themselves whether they agree with your reasoning or see parts of it differently. By identifying where group members' reasoning differs, you can help the group explore what has led people to reason differently; are they using other data, are they making other assumptions, or are they assigning different priorities to certain issues?

Some facilitators tend to focus the group on where the members agree and minimize discussion of where members disagree. These facilitators are often concerned that focusing on different views creates unnecessary conflict and defensive group member behavior that the facilitator will not be able to handle effectively. Because the Skilled Facilitator approach starts with the assumption that multiple views are an opportunity for learning, focusing on differences is essential. The mutual learning approach increases the chance that you can intervene on disagreement without creating unproductive conflict and defensive behavior.

As this rule implies, combining advocacy and inquiry requires that you both advocate and inquire. If you only advocate, you do not create the conditions for learning about a gap in your reasoning. If you advocate without inquiring, other

people respond by advocating their own point of view, which leads you to respond with more advocacy. This creates a reinforcing cycle of rising advocacy in which each party tries to convince the others.

If you only inquire, you do not help others understand your reasoning and why you are inquiring. Advocacy and inquiry alone are both ways of unilaterally controlling the conversation; both can easily contribute to defensive behavior in others.

Inquiry, Genuine and Rhetorical

Not all inquiry is genuine. **In genuine inquiry, you ask a question with the intent of learning. In rhetorical inquiry, you ask a question with the intent of implicitly conveying your point of view.** The question "Why don't you just try it my way and see how it works out?" is not genuine inquiry because embedded in the question is the implicit advocacy "just try it my way." In contrast, a genuine inquiry would be, "What kind of problems do you think might occur if you were to try it the way I'm suggesting?" Notice that in the genuine inquiry there is no intent to embed your own point of view in the inquiry.

The difference between genuine and rhetorical inquiry is not simply in words; it is a difference in intent and meaning and the kind of response you help to generate. If you use rhetorical inquiry, people infer that you are withholding information or trying to persuade them with your question. In the extreme, rhetorical inquiry feels like an inquisition and can lead those being questioned to become cautious, withhold information, and turn defensive.

Easing in sometimes takes the form of rhetorical inquiry. When you ease in, you indirectly try to raise an issue or advocate your point of view. One way of easing in is to use your question to get the other person to see your point of view without explicitly stating it. For example, you might ask, "Do you think it would be a good idea if we . . . ?" while privately thinking, *I think it would be a good idea if we. . . .*

Managers often ease in with their direct reports. A manager may be concerned that sharing her own view first will influence or simply reduce the input from their direct reports. The manager reasons that if she asks people what they think first, she will get the direct reports' opinions without their being influenced by her point of view. However, in this situation, direct reports might be reluctant to share their views because when they have done so in the past she responded with her own advocacy in order to show them that they were wrong. So, when the manager asks her question, the direct reports are wary about responding. They remain noncommittal in order to leave themselves room to change their views depending on the manager's response. This leads the manager to infer that her direct reports don't really know about the issue, which may prompt her to revert to advocacy, thinking that inquiry doesn't work. By using the ground rules and the mutual learning approach, a manager

does not need to worry about whether to speak first or last, because genuine inquiry increases the chance of the manager learning how others really think about an issue.

An Example

Exhibit 5.6 presents an actual conversation between Brad, the director of an agricultural support organization, and Paul, who reports to Brad. Brad considers Paul a highly educated and talented professional who nevertheless is resisting changing his work in response to changing client demands. Brad wants to offer suggestions without putting Paul on the defensive.

Notice that Brad decides to make his point in the form of a question, so it won't sound critical and so Paul won't get defensive. But Brad's question is

Exhibit 5.6. Not Combining Advocacy and Inquiry

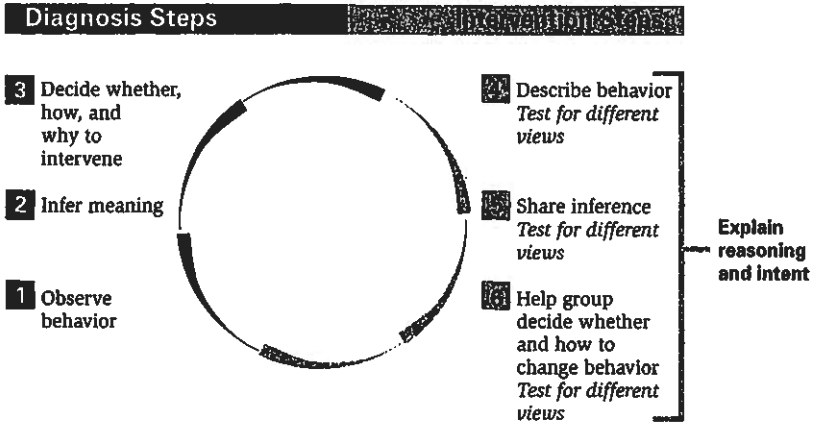
Brad's Thoughts and Feelings	The Conversation
He's kind of a defensive guy. I need to offer options and suggestions, but he probably won't take it right away.	BRAD: Let's take a look at your current plan of work.
In this new program plan, all he did was change the dates. There's nothing new here.	PAUL: That's fine with me. I'm proud of the work I've done this year.
I'll let him control this part of the meeting. I can listen for weak spots and make specific suggestions. Maybe having him share his accomplishments will let him know I do respect his work.	BRAD: Why don't you go through your current plan for me, and share why you chose these objectives? Also, tell me the areas where you have the greatest pride in your accomplishments.
Oh, boy, now I've done it. I hope this doesn't reinforce his position that he doesn't need to change.	PAUL: Here are the objectives I wrote this year. I know they look a lot like years past, but you know, people don't really change, and I'm proud of what I've accomplished.
Maybe if I talk about the big picture, he'll realize that we have to change. I'll put it in the form of a question so I don't sound critical.	BRAD: Paul, you work hard. I know these programs have been effective for years, but don't you think as quickly as our client base is changing, you need to change along with it?
Here comes the defense. I knew he'd react this way.	PAUL: What are you saying? Are you claiming that my work isn't good and I'm old-fashioned?

simply advocacy in the form of a question; Paul responds defensively, creating the very result that Brad hopes to avoid by easing in.

If Brad used the ground rule combining advocacy and inquiry he could say, "Paul, I'd like to talk with you about your work plan. I have some concerns that your new plan doesn't address the changing needs of our clients. Let me give you a couple of examples of what I mean and get your reactions. [Brad then turns to the ground rule "use specific examples" to illustrate his point.] What are your thoughts, Paul? What, if anything, do you see differently, or have I missed anything?"

If Brad does not combine advocacy and inquiry, you can intervene, as Figure 5.11 illustrates.

Figure 5.11. Intervening on Combining Advocacy and Inquiry



3 I'll intervene on this because if Brad has his point of view about this, it is important for Paul to understand it. Assuming Brad is easing in, it's also contributing to Paul's defensive response.

2 I'm inferring that Brad's question is not simply an inquiry and that Brad has his own view that he has not expressed.

1 Brad has said, "Don't you think as quickly as our client base is changing, you need to change along with it?"

4 "Brad, you asked Paul, 'Don't you think as quickly as our client base is changing, you need to change along with it?' Did I get that?" [*if yes, continue*]

5 "It sounds to me from your question like you believe Paul is not changing along with the clients. Am I off?" [*if no, continue*]

6 "Can you explain to Paul how you reached that conclusin and then ask Paul if he sees it differently?"

GROUND RULE SEVEN: JOINTLY DESIGN NEXT STEPS AND WAYS TO TEST DISAGREEMENTS

Jointly designing next steps and ways to test disagreements means deciding with others what topics to discuss, when to discuss them, how to discuss them, and when to switch topics, rather than making a decision privately and unilaterally. Group members routinely make unilateral decisions about the next step if they state what the agenda is without input from others or if they tell another group member that his comment is off topic. That is part of using a unilateral control approach to win.

If you use this ground rule to jointly design next steps, you might still draft the agenda, but you would explain to others what leads you to include the items that are on the agenda and exclude others, and then ask, "What changes, if any, do you think we need to make to the agenda?" By inquiring after advocating your proposed agenda, you may learn, for example, that there are other items needing to be resolved to adequately address some of your proposed agenda items.

A common way for a group member to unilaterally control the next step is by trying to keep the group discussion focused. For example, consider a group talking about how to increase sales to current customers. Yvonne says, "I think we have a problem with our billing cycles" and Arthur responds, "That's a different topic for another day." Arthur's comment unilaterally controls the focus of the conversation on the basis of his untested assumption that Yvonne's comment is unrelated to the current topic. If she thinks her comment is on topic, she may stop participating in the meeting. As a result, the group does not get the benefit of using her relevant information in deciding a course of action. In addition, she may end up not committed to the course of action that the group decides on.

If Arthur wants to use the ground rule, he can say, "Yvonne, I don't see how your point about the problem with billing cycles is related to increasing sales to current customers. Maybe I'm missing something. Can you help me understand how you see them being related?" Notice that in using the ground rule he assumes (and states explicitly) that he may be missing the relationship, not that she is off track. When she responds, Arthur and other group members might learn about a connection between the two topics that they have not previously considered. For example, the organization's billing cycles may create a long enough time lag that salespeople do not have real-time data about their customers' inventory. If there is a connection, the group can decide whether it makes more sense to pursue Yvonne's idea now or later. If it turns out that her comment is not related, Arthur can ask her to place it on a future meeting agenda.

In general, **jointly designing next steps means (1) advocating your point of view about how you want to proceed, including your interests, relevant information, reasoning, and intent; (2) inquiring about how others may see it differently; and (3) jointly crafting a way to proceed that takes into account group members' interests, relevant information, reasoning, and intent.** Jointly designing the next step creates valid information that enables the group to make an informed free choice about how to proceed.

Jointly designing a way to test disagreements is one specific type of next step. If members find themselves in a disagreement, each person may try to convince the others that his or her own position is correct, engaging in an escalating cycle of advocacy. Each offers evidence to support his or her position, and the others do the same for theirs. Each doubts the other's data, and none are likely to offer data to weaken their own position. Even after the disagreement is over, the "losers" are still likely to believe they are right.

A Developer Disagreement

Consider the disagreement laid out in Exhibit 5.7, between Jonathan and Parker, investment partners and developers in a large, complex real estate development that uses principles of traditional neighborhood development (TND), a high-density mixture of residential, commercial, office, and retail space in a tight pattern of pedestrian-oriented streets. Both want the greatest return on their joint investment. To maximize the return, Jonathan wants porches on the houses and Parker wants brick houses without porches.

Notice that both Jonathan and Parker cite their own sources to advocate their point of view. Each has gathered these sources unilaterally, without involving the other in collecting the information or assessing its validity. Jonathan does share the relevant information that there is not a lot of hard evidence yet to support his view, but he still advocates it. Both try to convince the other that he is wrong; neither engages in genuine inquiry.

To use the ground rule of jointly designing next steps and ways to test disagreements, Jonathan could say to Parker, "It looks like we disagree about whether porches will increase the value of the homes, and if they do, whether it is possible to have porches and brick together. Do you see our disagreement differently?" If Parker agrees that that is the disagreement, then Jonathan can continue: "Rather than each of us trying to convince each other, how about if together we figure out a way to find out whether porches will increase the value of the homes, and if they do, whether it is possible to have porches and brick together? We would agree beforehand on what data we need to look at and who to talk with. What do you think?"

If Jonathan does not use the ground rule, as facilitator you can intervene (Figure 5.12).

Exhibit 5.7. Not Jointly Designing Ways to Test Disagreement

Jonathan's Thoughts and Feelings	The Conversation
This argument was used by critics when TNDs first started, but no one except Parker has used it in the last four years.	PARKER: Let me tell you, where I grew up, we associate porches with poverty. Look at the poor parts of Washington. Very few of the houses built in the last forty years have porches.
Where is the hard evidence when I need it?	JONATHAN: Porches have made a huge comeback in recent years. Virtually every TND has a porch, and I understand porches are starting to bring a premium for builders.
Can't he find a way to use language to indicate that there is some middle ground? How can we reach a compromise when he needs to state his case in black and white?	PARKER: Well, builders have told us that they will not build both brick and porches. It's too expensive to do both. It's either brick or porches, and I want to have mostly brick.
The architect's plan is so logical. What is it he does not get about it?	JONATHAN: Yes, I know the builders have told us that. The reason why the architects' plan works so well, in my opinion, is that they have taken that into consideration. They have come up with a plan that balances brick and porches, putting brick townhouses with no porches where they are most prominent and using siding on the houses whose façades are mostly covered up by a full porch.
He states everything as a "fact." He just does not give an inch.	PARKER: Let me tell you, we are headed for disaster if we do not have more brick. I've been a builder in this region for more than forty years. Residents expect brick. It gives them a sense of having a good solid house. If we don't have a preponderance of brick, the builders will never be able to successfully sell these townhouses for the prices they need to get.
His apartment buildings that he built look like an engineer designed and built them. They have no redeeming architectural quality, though they provide him with a healthy cash flow.	JONATHAN: I really respect that you have been at this a lot longer than I have, but I have spent the last two years studying this new concept of TND. It is very new, and there is not a lot of hard evidence of its value. At the same time, many of the developers and designers I have talked with say that there are all kinds of details that are critical to the success of a TND, but we do not have absolute evidence of what is critical and what is not. From everything I have read, all new urbanists agree that porches are critical.

To conduct a joint test, Jonathan and Parker must be willing to accept the possibility that their information is inaccurate or incomplete.

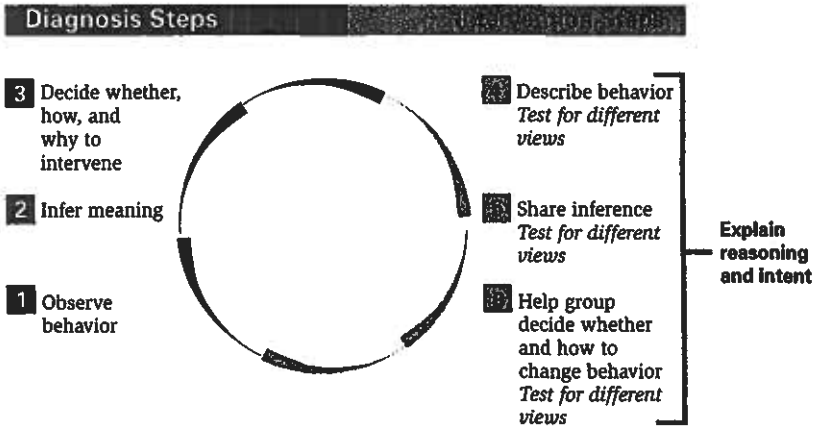
Designing the joint test entails deciding who they should speak with, what questions to ask, what statistical data to consider relevant, and how to collect the data. Whatever method they use, it is critical that both agree to it and agree to use the information that comes from it.

After Jonathan and Parker collect their information, they discuss the data, interpret it together, and reach a joint decision about porches and bricks. Two important questions to ask when jointly testing disagreements are "How could it be that we are both correct?" and "How could we each be seeing different parts of the same problem?" Members of a group often have contrasting sets of facts because they are talking about various times, places, and people. By jointly resolving disagreement, members generate information that can be validated; they are more likely to be internally committed to the outcome because they have jointly designed and agreed to the test.

When I think of this ground rule, I imagine two scientists with competing hypotheses who are able only to design a joint experiment to test their competing hypotheses. To conduct the experiment, the research design needs to be rigorous enough to meet the standards of both.

Some disagreements are easier to address than others. Deciding what a particular memo says may be as simple as opening the file and looking at it. Agreeing on what has been said in previous meetings may require talking to a number of people and trying to reconstruct the conversation. Particularly difficult is deciding what the effects will be of implementing a strategy or policy. Still, if the effects of the choice are significant, group members can collect data from other organizations that have already implemented a similar strategy or policy; or you can help the group simulate the effects by using systems-thinking modeling.

Figure 5.12. Intervening on Jointly Designing Next Steps and Ways to Test Disagreements



3 I'll intervene on this because if my inference is correct, they will not be able to jointly make a decision that both can support.

2 I'm inferring that each is using different data and that each may not agree with the validity of the other's data.

1 Parker has said, "Builders have told us that they will not build both brick and porches. It's too expensive to do both" and "If we don't have a preponderance of brick, the builders will never be able to successfully sell these townhouses for the prices they need to get." Jonathan has said, "I understand porches are starting to bring a premium for builders," "From everything I have read, all new urbanists agree that porches are critical," and "The architects' plan works well, in my opinion, because it balances brick and porches."

"Let me see if I can capture how the two of you are seeing it differently and then suggest a way of addressing the differences. Parker, you've said that builders have told you they will not build both brick and porches and that it's too expensive to do both. You are also thinking that if you don't have a preponderance of brick, the builders will never be able to successfully sell these townhouses for the prices they need to get. Yes? And Jonathan, you've said that you understand porches are starting to bring a premium for builders, that from everything you've read, all new urbanists agree that porches are critical, and that the architects' plan works well because it has a way to include both brick and porches. Have I misstated anything?" [*if no, continue*]

"From your comments, it looks to me like each of you is using different information to arrive at your conclusions. I'm thinking that each of you may question whether the other person's information is accurate. Have I inferred correctly?" [*if yes, continue*]

"Let me suggest a way that the two of you can decide together how to reach a decision about porches and bricks and then get your reactions. How about if together you decide what information you will use to make the decision and then jointly decide how to get the information so that both of you will consider it valid? Do you see any problems with this approach?"

GROUND RULE EIGHT: DISCUSS UNDISCUSSABLE ISSUES

Undiscussable issues are those that are relevant to the group's task but that group members believe they cannot discuss openly in the group without some negative consequences. Examples of undiscussables are a member who is not performing adequately and the effect on the group, or members not trusting one another, or a member reluctant to disagree with his manager since she is also a group member. Unfortunately, because such issues often raise feelings of mistrust, inadequacy, and defensiveness, members usually deal with the issues by talking about them not at all or outside the group meeting with people they trust.

The Problem with Not Discussing Undiscussables

Group members often choose not to discuss undiscussables, reasoning that to raise these issues makes some group members feel embarrassed or defensive; they therefore seek to save face for the group members (and for themselves as well). In short, they see discussing undiscussable issues as not being compassionate.

Yet people often overlook the negative systemic—and uncompassionate—consequences that they create by not raising an undiscussable issue. Consider three team members who are concerned about the poor performance of two others, and how the pair's performance affects the ability of the rest to excel as a team. If the concerned trio does not raise this issue with the two peers, the trio is likely to continue talking about the others. This creates a situation in which the two team members do not know the other three have concerns, so the pair cannot make a free and informed choice about whether to change their behavior. But because the pair are not changing their behavior, the trio continue to privately complain while simultaneously withholding information that could change the situation. Over time, the entire team's performance, its process, and its members' ability to meet their needs for growth and development are likely to suffer. This does not strike me as particularly compassionate, either for the pair in question or for the trio.

The Skilled Facilitator approach offers another perspective. By discussing undiscussable issues, you share relevant but difficult information with team members so that they can make a free and informed choice about whether to change their behavior. By raising these issues with the assumption first that you may be missing things, second that you may be contributing to the problem, and third that others are trying to act with integrity, you demonstrate your compassion for others and yourself.

A Challenging Ground Rule

The reason discussing undiscussable issues is a more difficult ground rule to use than the others is that this ground rule ties strongly into our unilateral control theory-in-use. When we try to discuss an undiscussable issue, the fact that

we think of it as undiscussable means we are likely to bring a unilateral control approach to the conversation. That is, we may be assuming that others will get defensive, we may be feeling defensive ourselves, and we may believe strongly that we know what the truth is. Further, because an undiscussable issue often has been around for a while, we may believe that our feelings are justified. All of these conditions make using this ground rule difficult.

Even though this ground rule is emotionally difficult to use, the process for employing it is contained in all the previous ground rules (which is why this ground rule comes late in the list). This means that when you are discussing an undiscussable issue, it is important to test assumptions and inferences, share all relevant information, use specific examples and agree on what important words mean, share your reasoning and intent, focus on interests, combine advocacy and inquiry, and jointly design next steps and ways to test disagreements.

Sharing your feelings about raising the undiscussable issue is relevant information here. You may say, "I want to raise what I think has been an undiscussable issue in the group. I'm raising it not to put anyone on the spot, but because I think we can be a much more effective team if we address this issue. I'm worried about discussing the issue because I'm concerned I may get defensive, or others may get defensive. If you see me getting defensive, please let me know."

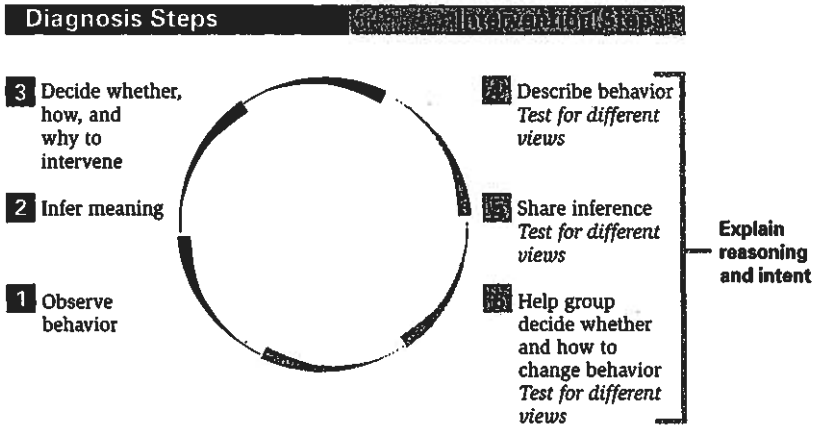
Group members can also explore their feelings about discussing such an issue without actually discussing its specific content. For example, a member might say, "I want to raise an important issue for the group, but I'm afraid that there may be reprisals toward me if I do. I'd like to talk about this possibility before I decide whether to identify the undiscussable issue." If a member has some assurance that his fear will not be realized, he may be more willing to talk openly about a previously undiscussable issue.

If as a facilitator you infer that there is an undiscussable issue, you can raise the issue to check whether your inference is correct. Figure 5.13 shows how to do so. In this example, Allison, an OD manager, is meeting with Stephanie, Bob, and Juan of the marketing function to explore how OD can help their function improve service quality.

GROUND RULE NINE: USE A DECISION-MAKING RULE THAT GENERATES THE DEGREE OF COMMITMENT NEEDED

Ground rule nine makes specific the core value of internal commitment. It increases the likelihood of group members supporting the decision that is made and implementing it.

Figure 5.13. Intervening to Discuss an Undiscussable Issue



3 I think it's important to raise this because if my inference is correct and the issue isn't raised, marketing may need OD help that they believe the OD people may not be able to provide. OD may also have a credibility problem that they are unaware of.

2 I'm inferring that Stephanie, Bob, or Juan have some concern about OD providing them consultation and that they are reluctant to raise this issue.

1 During the meeting, Stephanie, Bob, and Juan said that the group needs some help on improving service quality. Several times, Allison has said her human resource team can provide the help, and each time Stephanie, Bob, or Juan said that the OD team is already overcommitted to other important work. Stephanie and Bob also looked at each other before declining OD's offer.

"I want to share some observations and raise what may be an undiscussable issue. I'm raising it not to put people on the spot, but to see if there is an unaddressed issue that is preventing you from being as effective as you want to be. Here's what I've observed. During this meeting, several of you—Stephanie, Bob, and Juan—have commented that the group needs some OD help on improving service quality. Have I gotten anything incorrect?" [*if no, continue*] "And each time Allison has offered her OD team to provide the service, at least one of you has said that the OD team is already overcommitted to other important work. Am I correct?" [*if yes, continue*] "Stephanie and Bob, I also noticed one of you looking at the other before declining OD's offer. Yes?" [*if yes, continue*]

"From all of this, I am inferring that at least the three of you may have some concern about OD's ability to adequately provide the consultation. Is my inference accurate, or do others have another interpretation?"

[*not needed*]

Underlying this ground rule is the premise that the members' level of commitment to a decision is in part a function of the degree to which they make an informed free choice to support the decision. The more the group members are able to make an informed free choice, the more they are likely to be internally committed to the decision.

Decision-Making Rule Types

A group can use a number of decision-making processes. A decision-making process specifies who in the group makes a particular kind of decision, and how other members are involved in the process of that decision. Exhibit 5.8 shows four types of group decision-making processes, adapting the work of Victor Vroom and his colleagues.

In *consultative* group decision making, the leader or a subgroup makes the decision for the group after discussing with them ideas about the issue and possible solutions. In *democratic* decision making, the full group discusses the issue and is involved in making the decision; a decision is made when some percentage of the group agrees. Rather than a one-person, one-vote democratic approach, sometimes this vote is weighted in a way that gives influence preferentially to a powerful member or members (somewhat like national elections in the United States, in which the most populous states have greater influence through the electoral college).

In *consensus* decision making, everyone in the group is involved in making the decision. A decision is reached when all group members can support it and agree to implement it given their roles. In this definition of consensus, if one person does not support the decision then the group does not yet have consensus.

In *delegative* decision making, the leader gives the decision to the group or to a subgroup to make. The leader may specify conditions within which the decision must be made, such as limits on cost, time, or other criteria. In delegative decision making, the leader may or may not specify what decision-making rule to use.

Exhibit 5.8. Group Decision-Making Process Types

Type	Decision-Making Process
Consultative	Leader consults with group members, then leader makes decision.
Democratic	Leader and group discuss issue, then vote. Some possibly weighted percentage of group members is needed to agree on a decision.
Consensus	Leader and group members discuss issue and reach unanimous agreement.
Delegative	Leader delegates decision to group or subgroup to make, sometimes within leader's identified constraints.

Source: Adapted from Vroom and Jago, 1988; Vroom and Yetton, 1973.

Matching the Rule to the Commitment Needed

These group decision-making processes generate differing responses. Exhibit 5.9 shows the level of acceptance for implementing a decision.

As Vroom and Jago (1988) have described, group member commitment is necessary when implementation of a decision requires the support and cooperation of the group members. If commitment is needed and there are differing perspectives among members (or between group members and the leader), the decision-making process needs to help members (including the leader) explore their perspectives and create a shared understanding. Consensus decision making accomplishes this by ensuring that a decision is not reached until each group member can commit to the decision as his or her own. It equalizes the distribution of power in the group, because every member's concerns must be addressed and every member's consent is required to reach a decision. Making a decision by consensus can take more time than other methods, but because people are then internally committed to the decision, it will usually take less time to implement effectively.

Consensus implies that if group members do not have relevant information about the decision and they will implement the decision or will be affected by it, the leader has the responsibility of giving them the information that will enable them to make an informed choice.

Ground rule nine does not state that all decisions should be made by consensus. It recognizes that some decisions do not require the internal commitment generated through consensus; a decision-making process other than consensus can be appropriate. However, with divergent perspectives on an issue, you create a mismatch if you use a democratic or consultative process to try to generate internal commitment from group members.

If you use a consensus decision-making process, the approach to determining if there is consensus is simple. Once the group thinks it is close to reaching

Exhibit 5.9. Degree of Acceptance of a Decision

Internal commitment	Believes in the decision and sees it as his or her own; will do whatever is necessary to implement it effectively
Enrollment	Supports the decision; will work within his or her role to implement the decision
Compliance	Accepts the decision but does not believe in it; will do what is formally required within his or her role
Noncompliance	Does not support the decision; does not follow through on formal requirements within his or her role
Resistance	Actively undermines the decision

Source: Adapted from Senge, 1990; Vroom and Jago, 1988.

consensus, a member can state the decision under consideration, and then each member can say whether he or she consents. This avoids the mistake of assuming that silence means consent. Voting is inconsistent with consensus decision making, but the group can take a straw poll to see whether it is close to consensus and to see which members still have concerns. Some groups (say, a governing board) have bylaws that require that decisions be made by voting, which may seem to exclude consensus. Nevertheless, a group can attempt to reach consensus even if ultimately it must decide by vote.

Consensus can be used throughout the time a group is solving a problem, not just at the end when members select the best alternative. Whenever the group is about to move to the next step of the problem-solving process, it is appropriate to reach consensus to do so.

You may be reluctant to use consensus because in your experience, groups are rarely able to reach consensus and you are worried that key decisions will not get made. Many groups *are* unable to reach consensus because they do not use an effective set of ground rules. By using all the other ground rules, the group increases the likelihood that it can reach consensus.

USING THE GROUND RULES TOGETHER

The ground rules are like dance steps; each one is part of the foundation, but the power and elegance you see usually results from combining the steps to create movement with a purpose. I have focused on the ground rules individually as a way to introduce them and show how to use each one. However, as you can see from the case examples in this chapter, when I use one ground rule I am often using several others at the same time. As a group member or a facilitator, you can practice combining the ground rules to increase your ability to help the group move forward effectively.

The ground rules are necessary but not sufficient for effective group process. I think of the ground rules as each being a micro process, in the sense that it creates effective group behavior in the moment. But a group also needs a macro process to impart direction; consider problem-solving models, root cause analysis, and systems-thinking models for understanding complex systems. In Chapter Ten, I describe how to integrate the ground rules with this kind of macro process.

LEARNING TO USE THE GROUND RULES

You may feel awkward as you start using the ground rules. You may feel this doesn't sound like you; instead, it sounds like you imitating something you read in a book (well, actually you have) or heard in a workshop. It is natural to feel unnatural in beginning to use the ground rules. The unnaturalness comes from a number of sources, notably trying to translate your left-hand column into sentences that use the grammatical structure of the ground rules, trying to integrate the ground rules with your own natural speech pattern and word choice, and trying to put it all together so you can talk at the speed of normal conversation.

It takes practice to find your own voice in using the ground rules. With regular practice, you will probably find that you can use the ground rules in a way that sounds like you and that doesn't require you to talk at an unnaturally slow pace to find the words that you are looking for.

As you practice using the ground rules and understanding their implications, you may have new or renewed concern about whether it makes sense to use them. This is also natural. When you start practicing the ground rules, you do not—and cannot—make a fully informed choice. It is not possible to know in advance of practicing the ground rules all the risks you will see and concerns you will have. Exploring these concerns is an important part of the process of learning the ground rules.

SUMMARY

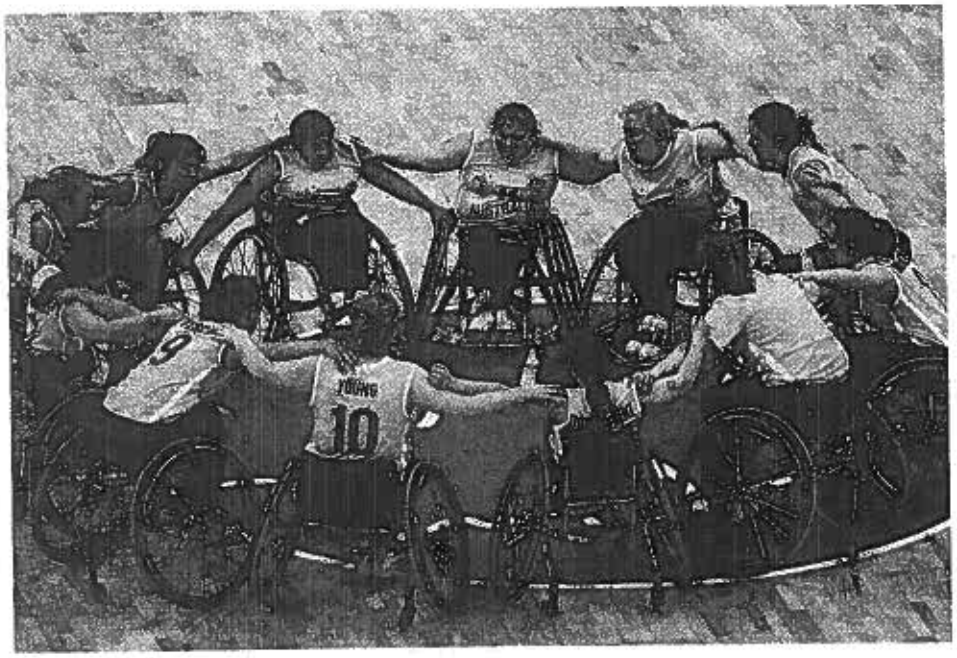
In this chapter, I have described the set of ground rules at the heart of the Skilled Facilitator approach. I explained how you can act inconsistently with the ground rules, use them yourself, and intervene to help others use them. In showing how to intervene to help others use the rules, I introduced the diagnosis-intervention cycle. In the next chapters, we explore in detail how to use this essential tool.

Note

1. In general, the ground rules are derived from Argyris (1982) and Argyris and Schön (1974). Ground rule five is from Fisher, Ury, and Patton (1991), which was based on the work of Mary Parker Follett in the early 1990s (Graham, 1995).

Johnson & Johnson [2006]

1 Group Dynamics



Basic Concepts to Be Covered in This Chapter

In this chapter a number of concepts are defined and discussed. The major ones are in the following list. Students should divide into pairs. Each pair is to (1) define each concept, noting the page on which it is defined and discussed, and (2) ensure that both members understand its meaning. Then combine into groups of four. Compare the answers of the two pairs. If there is disagreement, look up the concept in the chapter and clarify it until all members agree on and understand the definition.

Concepts

1. Group
2. Group dynamics
3. Group effectiveness
4. Interdependence
5. Role
6. Norm
7. Status
8. Sequential-stage theory of group development
9. Recurring-phase theory of group development
10. Primary group
11. Reference group
12. Group processing
13. Action research
14. Kurt Lewin

GROUP DYNAMICS AND ME

Although the scientific investigations of group work are but a few years old, I don't hesitate to predict that group work—that is, the handling of human beings not as isolated individuals, but in the social setting of groups—will soon be one of the most important theoretical and practical fields. . . . There is no hope for creating a better world without a deeper scientific insight into the . . . essentials of group life.

Kurt Lewin (1943)

Membership in groups is inevitable and universal. All day long we interact first in one group and then in another. Our family life, our leisure time, our friendships, and our careers are all filled with groups. In fact, if a person from outer space conducted a study of the people of Earth, group membership would probably be the dominant characteristic noted. We are born into a group called the family, and we would not survive the first few years of our lives, the first few weeks, or even the first few minutes without membership in this group. Within our family and peer groups, we are socialized into ways of behaving and thinking, educated, and taught to have certain perspectives on ourselves and our world. Our personal identity is derived from the way in which we are perceived and treated by other members of our groups. We learn, work, worship, and play in groups. As humans we have an inherent social nature: Our life is filled with groups from the moment of our birth to the moment of our death.

Group dynamics is the area of social science that focuses on advancing knowledge about the nature of group life. It is the scientific study of the nature of groups, behavior

in groups, group development, and the interrelations between groups and individuals, other groups, and larger entities. Knowledge of group dynamics has the potential to change the way we think about groups and, consequently, the way we function in groups. The purposes of this book, therefore, are to help you understand the theory and research on group dynamics and improve your own small-group skills.

As a starting point, Figure 1.1 provides a helpful summary of the nature of group dynamics. The different concepts and terms listed in Figure 1.1 are discussed throughout this chapter and the rest of the book. For now, it serves as an introduction to the types of ideas encompassed by group dynamics. After reviewing the information provided in Figure 1.1, think carefully about each of the statements listed in the Self-Diagnosis on page 3. These statements are designed to make you think concretely about your current understanding of groups and how you participate in them.

Importance of Groups

- We are small-group beings
- We live in groups
- Groups and quality of life

Nature of Groups

- Group orientation
- Individual orientation

Types of Groups

- Pseudo
- Traditional
- Effective
- High performance

Group Structure

- Roles
- Norms

Stages of Group Development

Sequential Stages

- Forming
- Norming
- Storming
- Performing
- Adjourning

Recurring Stages

- Task and emotional expressions
- Depend, pair, fight or flight
- Affection, inclusion, control

Basic Elements of Effectiveness

- Positive interdependence
- Individual accountability
- Promotive interaction
- Social skills
- Group processing

Field of Group Dynamics

- Nature of group dynamics
- History of group dynamics
- Kurt Lewin
- Nature of book

Dynamics of Promotive Interaction

- Creating clear, operational, mutual goals members are committed to
- Communicating ideas and feelings accurately and clearly
- Distributed participation and leadership
- Equal access to power based on expertise, access to information
- Decision procedures flexibly matched with situational needs
- Controversy used to promote creative problem solving, critical thinking
- Conflicts are faced, encouraged, and resolved constructively.

Figure 1.1 Nature of group dynamics.

Self-Diagnosis

Each of the following seven statements describes an action related to group effectiveness. For each statement mark

5 if you always behave that way
4 if you frequently behave that way
3 if you occasionally behave that way
2 if you seldom behave that way
1 if you never behave that way

WHEN I AM A MEMBER OF A GROUP

___ 1. I clarify the group's goals and ensure that the goals are formulated so that members "sink or swim" together and are committed to achieving them.

___ 2. I facilitate communication by modeling good sending and receiving skills and ensuring that communication among all group members is distributed and two-way.

___ 3. I provide leadership by taking whatever action is needed to help the group achieve its goals and maintain good working relationships among members, and I encourage all other members to do the same.

___ 4. I use my expertise and knowledge to influence the other group members to increase their efforts to achieve our mutual goals, and I let myself be influenced by other members who are knowledgeable and have relevant expertise.

___ 5. I suggest different ways of making decisions (such as majority vote or consensus) depending on (a) the availability of time and resources, (b) the size and seriousness of the decision, and (c) the amount of member commitment needed to implement the decision.

___ 6. I advocate my views and challenge the views of others in order to create high-quality, creative decisions.

___ 7. I face my conflicts with other group members and present the conflicts as problems to be jointly solved. If we are unable to do so, I request the help of other group members to help us resolve the conflicts constructively.

___ **Total Score**

EXERCISE 1.1

Your Solitary Activities

1. List everything you do in a typical day from the moment you wake up until the moment you fall asleep.
2. Delete from your list all the activities you perform with groups of people and see what is left.
3. Form a group of three and discuss the results.

EXERCISE 1.2

Who Am I?

We are all members of groups. If we are asked to describe who we are, most of us include information about the groups to which we belong. "I'm a student at the University of Minnesota," "I'm a member of the hockey team," "I'm a Johnson," "I'm a male," "I'm an American," and so forth. Membership in groups may be formal ("I'm an employee of IBM"), aspiring ("I want to be rich"), marginal ("Sometimes I'm invited to Ralph's parties, sometimes I'm not"), voluntary ("I'm a Baptist"), and nonvoluntary ("I'm a female"). To a large extent, our memberships define who we are as individuals.

1. We can all describe ourselves in many ways. Write ten different answers to the question "Who am I?" on a sheet of paper. Answer in terms of groups you belong to, beliefs you hold, and your roles and responsibilities.
2. Rank your answers from most important to your sense of self to least important to your sense of self.
3. Form a group of three and share your self-descriptions. Count how many memberships are represented in the triad. Discuss the role of groups in your view of who you are as a person.
4. Count how many group memberships are represented in the class.

EXERCISE 1.3

What Is a Group?

The definition of a group is controversial. The purpose of this exercise is to structure a critical examination of the different definitions. The procedure is as follows:

1. The class forms groups of seven members.
2. Each member receives a sheet containing one of the seven definitions that appear on the following pages. Without interacting with the other group members, each member is to proceed as follows:
   a. Study his or her definition until it is thoroughly understood.
   b. Plan how to teach the definition to the other members of the group.
   c. Give three examples of groups that meet the criterion contained in the definition.
   d. Give three examples of two or more people in close proximity who do not meet the criterion contained in the definition.
   e. Explain in what way(s) his or her group (doing this exercise) meets the criterion contained in the definition.

   Allow ten minutes for this phase of the exercise.
3. Each group meets to derive a single definition of the concept group. Up to twenty minutes is allowed for this phase.
4. Each group reads its definition to the entire class.
5. If there is substantial disagreement, the class forms new groups (composed of one member from each of the previous groups). The task of the new group is to arrive at one definition of the concept group, each member representing the definition of his or her former group.
6. Each group reads its definition to the entire class.

WHAT IS A GROUP?

It takes two flints to make a fire.

Louisa May Alcott

In a bus trapped in a traffic jam, six passengers begin to talk to each other, comparing reactions and sharing previous similar experiences. They start to develop a plan of action to get the bus out of the heavy traffic. Is this a group? In Yellowstone National Park it is deep winter. Several cross-country skiers glide through an isolated, snow-covered valley. They are studying winter ecology and photography. Periodically they cluster around a professional photographer as he explains the ways the winter scenes may be photographed. The vacationers admire and discuss the beautiful winter scenery as they photograph it. Is this a group? Do groups exist at all? How do you tell when you are a member of a group?

In reading a book on group dynamics, you first need to understand what a group is. We all know that groups exist, but confusion and disagreements abound when we try to define the word *group*. Many social scientists think they know exactly what a group is. The trouble is, they do not agree with one another. The reasoning behind seven of the most common definitions of the word *group* is discussed in the following sections. Notice where and how the definitions are the same and where and how they are different.

Goals

A **group** may be defined as a number of individuals who join together to achieve a goal. Groups exist for a reason. People join groups in order to achieve goals they are unable to achieve by themselves. It is questionable whether a group could exist unless there was a mutual goal that its members were trying to achieve. Freeman, as early as 1936, pointed out that people join groups in order to achieve common goals. Other social scientists who have defined group this way are Mills and Deutsch:

> To put it simply, they [small groups] are units composed of two or more persons who come into contact for a purpose and who consider the contact meaningful (Mills, 1967, p. 2).
>
> A psychological group exists (has unity) to the extent that the individuals composing it perceive themselves as pursuing promotively interdependent goals (Deutsch, 1949a, p. 136).

Interdependence

A **group** may be defined as a collection of individuals who are interdependent in some way. According to this definition, the individuals are not a group unless an event that

affects one of them affects them all. Social scientists who have defined group in this way believe as follows:

> A group is a collection of individuals who have relations to one another that make them interdependent to some significant degree. As so defined, the term group refers to a class of social entities having in common the property of interdependence among their constituent members (Cartwright & Zander, 1968, p. 46).
>
> By this term [group] we generally mean a set of individuals who share a common fate, that is, who are **interdependent** in the sense that an event which affects one member is likely to affect all (Fiedler, 1967, p. 6).
>
> Conceiving of a group as a dynamic whole should include a definition of group which is based on interdependence of the members (or better, on the subparts of the group) (Lewin, 1951, p. 146).

Interpersonal Interaction

A **group** may be defined as a number of individuals who are interacting with one another. According to this definition, a group does not exist unless interaction occurs. Social scientists who have defined group in this way state the following:

> For a collection of individuals to be considered a group there must be some interaction (Hare, 1976, p. 4).
>
> A group is a number of people in interaction with one another, and it is this interaction process that distinguishes the group from an aggregate (Bonner, 1959, p. 4).
>
> A group may be regarded as an open interaction system in which actions determine the structure of the system and successive interactions exert coequal effects upon the identity of the system (Stodgill, 1959, p. 18).
>
> We mean by a group a number of persons who communicate with one another often over a span of time, and who are few enough so that each person is able to communicate with all the others, not at secondhand, through other people, but face-to-face (Homans, 1950, p. 1).

Perception of Membership

A **group** may be defined as a social unit consisting of two or more persons who perceive themselves as belonging to a group. According to this definition, the persons are not a group unless they perceive themselves to be part of a group. Social scientists who have defined group in this way posit the following:

> A small group is defined as any number of persons engaged in interaction with one another in a single face-to-face meeting or series of such meetings, in which each member receives some impression or perception of each other member distinct enough so that he can, either at the time or in later questioning, give some reaction to each of the others as an individual person, even though it be only to recall that the other was present (Bales, 1950, p. 33).

> We may define a social group as a unit consisting of a plural number of separate organisms (agents) who have a collective perception of their unity and who have the ability to act and/or are acting in a unitary manner toward their environment (M. Smith, 1945, p. 227).

Structured Relationships

A **group** may be defined as a collection of individuals whose interactions are structured by a set of roles and norms. According to this definition, the individuals are not a group unless role definitions and norms structure their interactions. Social scientists who have defined group in this way are McDavid and Harari, and Sherif and Sherif:

> A social-psychological group is an organized system of two or more individuals who are interrelated so that the system performs some function, has a standard set of role relationships among its members, and has a set of norms that regulate the function of the group and each of its members (McDavid & Harari, 1968, p. 237).
>
> A group is a social unit which consists of a number of individuals who stand in (more or less) definite status and role relationships to one another and which possesses a set of values or norms of its own regulating the behavior of individual members, at least in matters of consequence to the group (Sherif & Sherif, 1956, p. 144).

Mutual Influence

A **group** may be defined as a collection of individuals who influence each other. Individuals are not a group unless they are affecting and being affected by each other and, therefore, the primary defining characteristic of a group is interpersonal influence. Shaw (1981, p. 11) stated, "A group is two or more persons who are interacting with one another in such a manner that each person influences and is influenced by each other person."

Motivation

A **group** may be defined as a collection of individuals who are trying to satisfy some personal need through their joint association. According to this definition, the individuals are not a group unless they are motivated by some personal reason to be part of a group. Individuals belong to the group in order to obtain rewards or to satisfy personal needs. It is questionable that a group could exist unless its members' needs are satisfied by their membership. Social scientists who have defined group in this way write as follows:

> We define "group" as a collection of individuals whose existence as a collection is rewarding to the individuals (Bass, 1960, p. 39).
>
> The definition which seems most essential is that a group is a collection of organisms in which the existence of all (in their given relationships) is necessary to the satisfaction of certain individual needs in each (Cattell, 1951, p. 167).

What Is the Best Way to Define a Group?

Following are the seven definitions of the concept *group*. Rank them from most accurate (1) to least accurate (7). Write down your rationale for your ranking. Find a partner and share your ranking and rationale, listen to his or her ranking and rationale, and cooperatively create a new, improved ranking and rationale. Then find another pair and repeat the procedure in a group of four.

Rank	Definition
_____	A **group** is a number of individuals who join together to achieve a goal.
_____	A **group** is several individuals who are interdependent in some way.
_____	A **group** is a number of individuals who are interacting with one another.
_____	A **group** is a social unit consisting of two or more persons who perceive themselves as belonging to a group.
_____	A **group** is a collection of individuals whose interactions are structured by a set of roles and norms.
_____	A **group** is a collection of individuals who influence each other.
_____	A **group** is a collection of individuals who are trying to satisfy some personal need through their joint association.

Some of these definitions may be overly specific. Some of the definitions may overlap in some ways. What each implies, however, is that not every collection of people is a group. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) defines a *group* as a number of persons or things regarded as forming a unit on account of any kind of mutual or common relation or classified together on account of a common degree of similarity. On the basis of the preceding definitions, a **small group** may be defined as two or more individuals in face-to-face interaction who are aware of their positive interdependence as they strive to achieve mutual goals, aware of their membership in the group, and aware of the others who belong to the group. Though there may be some groups that do not fully fit this definition, the most commonly recognized examples of groups do.

A distinction can be made between small and large groups. Whereas the definition of a small group usually includes member interaction, a group may also involve large numbers of members who have some common characteristic without actually meeting one other (such as a reference group, discussed later in this chapter). A community can be a large group, as can individuals with the same ethnic heritage.

Groups may be contrasted with aggregates. An **aggregate** is a collection of individuals who are present at the same time and place but who do *not* form a unit or have a common degree of similarity. Individuals standing on a street corner, the members of an audience at a play, and students listening to a lecture are aggregates, not groups.

Do Groups Even Exist?

Not everyone believes that groups exist. One of the more interesting social science debates centers on the nature of groups. There are two contrasting positions: the group orientation and the individual orientation. Those that support group orientation focus on the group as a whole, as something separate from the individual group members. In explaining the actions of group members, social scientists focus on the influences of the group and the larger social system of which the group is a part. They believe that when people come together as a group they form a new social entity with its own rules, attitudes, beliefs, and practices.

Supporters of the individualist orientation, however, focus on the individual in the group; without individuals, groups do not exist. In order to explain the functioning of the group, social scientists study the attributes, cognitions, and personalities of the group members. One of the first supporters of an individualist orientation, Floyd Allport (1924), argued that groups do not think, feel, or act—only people do, and therefore groups are not real entities and are not deserving of study. See the Group Orientation versus Individualistic Orientation comparison table for more information about these two positions.

Group Orientation	Individualistic Orientation
The *group orientation* focuses on the group as a whole. In explaining the actions of group members, social scientists focus on the influences of the group and the larger social systems of which it is part. Emile Durkheim (1898, p. 104), arguing that groups were entities different from individuals, stated, "If, then, we begin with the individual, we shall be able to understand nothing of what takes place in the group." He posited that small *primary groups* (small groups characterized by face-to-face interaction, interdependence, and strong group identification such as families and very close friends) are the building blocks of society, and he worked upward from this level to an analysis of social systems in general. He was convinced that a group mind or collective consciousness dominated individual will in many situations. Le Bon (1895) believed that a group mind exists separate from the minds of individual members. Cartwright and Zander (1968) maintained that a group can be emotionally healthy or pathological. Cattell (1951) described groups as possessing different personalities. Lewin (1935), as a Gestalt psychologist, noted that a group cannot be understood by considering only the qualities and characteristics of each member. When individuals merge into a group, something new is created that must be seen as an entity in itself. Changes in one aspect of a group will necessarily lead to changes in the other group features.	The *individualistic orientation* focuses on the individual in the group. In order to explain the functioning of the group, psychologists focus on the attitudes, cognitions, and personalities of the members. Floyd Allport (1924) argued that groups do not think, feel, or act (only people do), and therefore groups are not real and are not deserving of study. He said, "Groups have no nervous systems, only individuals have nervous systems." To Allport, groups are no more than (a) shared sets of values, ideas, thoughts, and habits that exist simultaneously in the minds of several persons or (b) the sum of the actions of each member taken separately. His *coup de grâce* was his observation, "You can't stumble over a group." Many social scientists have agreed with Allport and have taken a rather cavalier approach to the attributes that determine whether a collection of people is a group. Groups have also been defined on the basis of individual perceptions of other members (Bales, 1950), individual reward (Bass, 1960), and individual purpose and meaning (Mills, 1967). Much of the research on groups, furthermore, has used individual members as the unit of analysis.

Solomon Asch (1952) adopted a middle ground by comparing groups to water. He argued that in order to understand the properties of water, it is important to know the characteristics of its elements, hydrogen and oxygen. This knowledge alone, however, is not sufficient to understand water—the combination of hydrogen and oxygen must be examined as a unique entity. Similarly, groups must be studied as unique entities, even though it is important to know the characteristics of the individual members.

Although supporters of the individualistic orientation may argue that groups are not important, evidence suggests that groups evoke stronger reactions than an individual engaging in the same behavior. Actions by groups and individuals elicit differing preferences for redress (Abelson, Dasgupta, Park, & Banaji, 1998). When individuals are perceived to be part of a cohesive group (as opposed to an aggregate of unrelated individuals), observers express stereotypic judgments about the individuals and infer that their behavior was shaped by the presence of others (Oakes & Turner, 1986; Oakes, Turner, & Haslam, 1991; Wilder, 1977, 1978). A misogynist statement made by an

Barriers to Capitalizing on the Power of Groups

Directions: Consider the following five sources of resistance to using small groups. Rate yourself from 1 to 5 on each source.

1——2——3——4——5

Low	Middle	High
Not a Concern of Mine	Somewhat a Concern	Consistently and Strongly a Concern

Causes of Missed Opportunities to Capitalize on the Power of Groups

_____ **Belief that isolated work is the natural order of the world.** Such a myopic focus blinds individuals to the realization that no one person could have built a cathedral, achieved America's independence from England, or created a supercomputer.

_____ **Resistance to taking responsibility for others.** Many individuals do not easily (a) take responsibility for the performance of colleagues or (b) let colleagues assume responsibility for their work.

_____ **Confusion about what makes groups work.** Many individuals may not know the difference between effective and ineffective groups.

_____ **Fear that they cannot use groups effectively.** Not all groups work. Most adults have had experiences with ineffective and inefficient committees, task forces, and clubs, and know how bad groups can be. When many educators weigh the potential power of learning groups against the possibility of failure, they choose to play it safe and rely on isolated work.

_____ **Concern about the time and effort required to change.** Using groups requires individuals to apply what is known about effective groups in a disciplined way. Learning how to do so and engaging in such disciplined action may seem daunting.

individual, for example, provokes a different reaction than a misogynist statement made by a group. Social scientists of both the individualistic and group persuasions have been productive in generating theories of group functioning and conducting research to validate or disconfirm the theories. They are both represented in this book.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GROUPS

No man is an island, entire of itself.

John Donne

Humans are small-group beings. We always have been and we always will be. Human evolution has depended on individuals coming together in various types of groups to live, work, and govern. For 200,000 years humans lived in small hunting-and-gathering groups. For 10,000 years humans lived in small farming communities. In the last 1,000 or so years, large cities have developed. Each of these living conditions depends on cooperative efforts of group work for its success. In fact, our ability to function effectively in groups may be the reason humans exist today. This ability certainly played a large role in the manner humans developed.

Two recent branches of the human species are Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons (modern humans). Our origins are somehow linked with the fate of the Neanderthals. We have never been proud of our extinct predecessors, partly because of their looks. Nevertheless, the Neanderthals represent a high point in the human story. Their lineage goes back to the earliest members of the genus *Homo*. They were the original pioneers. Over thousands of years, Neanderthals moved out of Africa by way of the Near East into India, China, Malaysia, and southern Europe. In recent times, around 150,000 years ago, they pioneered glacial landscapes and became the first humans to cope with climates hospitable only to woolly mammoths and reindeer.

There is no anatomical evidence that the Neanderthals were cerebrally inferior to us (the Cro-Magnons). In fact, they had a larger brain than we do. There is no doubt whatever that they were our physical superiors. Their strongest individuals could probably lift weights of half a ton or so. Physically, we are quite puny in comparison. But we gradually replaced the Neanderthals during an overlapping period of a few thousand years. It may have mainly been a matter of attrition and population pressure. As the glaciers from Scandinavia advanced, northern populations of Neanderthals moved south while our ancestors were moving north out of Africa. About 40,000 years ago we met in Europe. We flourished and they vanished about 30,000 years ago.

There are numerous explanations for the disappearance of the Neanderthals. Perhaps they evolved into us. Perhaps we merged through intermarriage. Perhaps there was an intergroup competition for food, with the Neanderthals unable to meet our challenge and dying off in marginal areas. Perhaps the Neanderthals were too set in their ways and were unable to evolve and refine better ways to cooperate while we were continually organizing better cooperative efforts to cope with changing climatic conditions.

During the time our ancestors coexisted with the Neanderthals, Cro-Magnons developed highly sophisticated cooperative efforts characterized by social organization, group-hunting procedures, creative experimentation with a variety of materials, sharing

of knowledge, division of labor, trade with other communities, and transportation systems. We sent out scouts to monitor the movements of herds of animals we preyed on. The Neanderthals probably did not. We cached supplies and first aid materials to aid hunting parties far away from our home bases. The Neanderthals apparently did not. Neanderthals probably engaged their prey chiefly in direct combat. We developed more efficient ways of hunting, such as driving animals over cliffs. We developed more sophisticated tools and weapons to kill from a distance, such as the spear and the bow and arrow. The Neanderthals probably did not. The Neanderthals used local materials to develop tools. We were more selective, often obtaining special fine-grained and colorful flints from quarries as far as 250 miles away through trade networks. We improved the toolmaking process through experimentation and sharing knowledge with other communities. The Neanderthals probably did not. The Neanderthals used stone almost exclusively for tools. We used bone and ivory to make needles and other tools. We "tailored" our clothes and made ropes and nets. Our ability to obtain more food than we needed spawned the formation of far-ranging trade and social networks. These more complex forms of cooperation directly led to the accumulation of wealth and the creation of artistic efforts, laws, and storytelling to preserve traditions. Whether we replaced or evolved from the Neanderthals, our ingenuity was evident in organizing cooperative efforts to increase our standard of living and the quality of our lives. We excelled at organizing effective group efforts.

Groups and the Quality of Life

Our ancestors' lives were improved greatly and dramatically by living in groups, but what about us today? It is fair to say that the quality of contemporary life is related directly to group effectiveness. With so many of our activities and social interactions taking place within groups—be it our risk-management group at work, our weekend softball team, or the people we live with—almost every aspect of modern life is affected by group dynamics. Knowledge of group dynamics, therefore, is a tool that can make our lives better and more meaningful, because it can help us build effective groups in every part of our lives.

Understanding group dynamics is central to maintaining a viable family. For thousands of years, family life has been one of the sustaining values of civilization. Anthropologist Margaret Mead observed that the family is the toughest institution humans have, and it is one of our core small groups. The structure of the family, however, has changed significantly in the last hundred years. First came the demise of the extended family. More recently, the nuclear family has been on the decline as more single-parent households form. Today, one child in four is raised by a single parent. Obviously, creating sustainable families is a hard task in our modern climate. In order to build and maintain a constructive family life within the diverse demands of modern life, individuals need to have a thorough knowledge of group dynamics and small-group skills.

A knowledge of group dynamics is central to effective businesses and industries. During the first half of the twentieth century, mass production made the United States the world leader in manufacturing. By the end of the twentieth century, however, many businesses had turned to the high productivity generated by small groups. Today, many companies rely on employees working in teams to design and launch new products, conduct research and training, handle employee issues, facilitate interdepartmental communication, and much more. Furthermore, the dramatic new technologies made available in the past two decades now enable groups to work between offices, across towns, and around the world. What makes organizations viable today is their ability to create teams dominated by a culture of learning, continuous improvement, and adaptation. In turn, what makes people viable employees is their ability to work in small groups and produce results (see Chapter 13).

Understanding group dynamics is central to education. Over the past few generations, the teaching paradigm has changed from lecture and individual work to cooperative learning (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1998a, 1998b). Instead of listening to a teacher's lecture and taking notes, students now work in small groups to help one another learn a specific lesson or task. Instead of comparing students to one another and encouraging competition, cooperative group-based work allows students to work together in a manner that benefits all of them. Cooperative learning has been shown to produce higher achievement, more positive relationships, and greater psychological health than competitive or individualistic learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; see Chapter 11).

A knowledge of group dynamics is central to the long-term maintenance of psychological health. Simply by watching television commercials or flipping through the pages of almost any magazine, we can infer that the country is experiencing an epidemic of depression, anxiety, and mental illness. Prescription drugs, various forms of therapy, and a host of other products and services advertised in the media are aimed at treating these problems. This proliferation is more than a marketing trend, however; surveys indicate the rate of depression over the last two generations has increased roughly tenfold. People, especially young people, are experiencing much more depression, feeling hopeless, giving up, being passive, having low self-esteem, and committing suicide. Being involved in supportive groups, however, can help prevent the occurrence of psychological problems. Networks of friends and family, group activities, and other types

of productive group interaction can help people feel more connected to the world around them, making them less depressed and anxious. Furthermore, group therapy and counseling groups are a preferred method of treatment for psychological problems (see Chapter 12).

In short, knowing group dynamics theory and having small-group skills can change your life. They can make you more employable and lead to greater career success. They can improve your friendships. They can lead to more caring and loving family relationships and greater competence as parents. They can promote greater psychological health and increased ability to cope with stress and adversity. *When it comes to group functioning, knowledge does give power.* But knowledge of group dynamics in itself is not sufficient to promote effective functioning; social skills also are required. To promote effective group functioning, you must know what an effective group is and have the necessary social skills to help create one.

As you continue reading about groups—how they operate and are constructed, and why a group is effective and productive—what you are learning is the nature of groups. To that end, you should focus on the following ideas:

1. The nature of group structure
2. The relationship between group structure and group productivity
3. How the dynamics of the group determine its effectiveness
4. The ways groups develop over time

GROUP STRUCTURE

Imagine you are an ecologist whose career has been dedicated to studying ecosystems around the world. You have encountered many diverse habitats in your studies, from thick rain forests to parched deserts. They all had a set of common features: topography, weather patterns, plants, animals, and their interconnections. You have observed, for example, that plants and animals sharing certain territories develop elaborate divisions of labor and broad symbioses. You also have learned that plants and animals adapt over time to be uniquely suited for survival in their particular habitats. Thus, you expect to find a basic ecological structure when you travel to a new habitat.

Now imagine you are studying small groups. Although many diverse types of groups may be found, when you approach a new group you look for the basic features that characterize all groups. These features include a purpose that defines the territory of the group and binds the members together, a definable pattern of communication among members, different members performing different functions that fit into an overall division of labor, procedures for managing conflicts, expectations concerning acceptable and unacceptable behavior by group members, and the adaptation of the group to the organization, society, and culture within which it is based. Once the basic structure has been identified, the nature of interpersonal relations in the group can be understood as clearly as can the functioning of an ecosystem.

Just like ecosystems, groups have a structure. Groups function as their members interact, and whenever two or more individuals join together to achieve a goal, a group structure develops. Observers of groups who want to know how a group truly functions look beyond the group's unique features to its basic structure, a stable pattern of interaction among members. Two aspects of group interaction are especially important to understanding how a group is structured: differentiated roles and integrating norms. Within any group, no matter which organization, society, or culture it belongs to, the group's roles and norms structure the interaction among group members. Roles differentiate the responsibilities of group members, whereas norms integrate members' efforts into a unified whole.

Group Structure

	Definition	Example
Roles	Expectations defining the appropriate behavior of an occupant of a position toward other related positions	President, vice president, secretary; summarizer, recorder
Norms	Common beliefs regarding group members' appropriate behavior, attitudes, and perceptions; rules, implicit or explicit, that regulate the behavior of group members	Promptness, courtesy, reciprocity, responsibility

Roles: Differentiation Within Groups

Think of a group you have belonged to, and answer this question: Did everyone in the group act the same way or perform the same functions? In all likelihood, your answer is "no." A considerable degree of differentiation usually exists within groups, meaning different members work on different tasks and are expected to accomplish different things. In other words, different group members play different roles.

Roles define the formal structure of the group and differentiate one position from another. Formally, a **role** may be defined as a set of expectations governing the appropriate behavior of an occupant of a position toward occupants of other related positions. Often such roles are assigned in a relatively formal manner, such as appointing a president, secretary, treasurer, and so on. At other times, individuals drift into various roles on the basis of their interests and skills. Once a role is assumed, however, the member is expected (by other group members) to behave in certain ways. Members who conform to their role requirements are rewarded, whereas those who deviate are punished.

Roles ensure that the task behaviors of group members are interrelated appropriately so that the group's goals are achieved. The roles usually are complementary in that one cannot be performed without the other (e.g., the roles of "teacher" and "student"). The expectations that define a role include rights and obligations; the obligations of one role are the rights of other roles. One of the obligations of being a teacher, for example, includes structuring a learning situation, whereas one of the rights of being a student is to have learning situations structured by the teacher. Within a group, expectations of the obligations that accompany a particular role can conflict; this is called **role conflict.** What a principal expects from a teacher and what students expect from a teacher, for example, can be contradictory. Contradictory expectations, therefore, can create one type of role conflict.

A second type of role conflict occurs when the demands of one role are incompatible with the demands of another role. Every person is required to play multiple roles, and almost everyone belongs to more than one group. Sometimes such role conflict can provide great drama. Back in the Old West, for example, Sheriff Pat Garrett was called on to arrest the famous outlaw Billy the Kid. Billy the Kid also happened to be one of Garrett's best friends, but Garrett shot him anyway. This situation, although extreme, illustrates how roles can influence our actions in ways that make us act contrary to our private feelings or vested interests.

Stanley Milgram provided an important example of role incompatibility with his famous studies on obedience to authority (1974). In these studies, he placed paid adult subjects in the role of teacher and gave them the responsibility of giving "learners" an electric shock when they committed a memory error. Milgram began his study with the intention of showing that teachers would refuse to comply with the requirements of their role if those requirements went against their own personal beliefs. Once the study was under way, however, the findings showed a different situation. Although almost all teachers began to express reluctance and show signs of stress as the intensity of the shock increased and the learner cried out in pain, the majority of the teachers continued to administer the shocks. Over 60% of subjects administered the maximum shock (450 volts) to the learner. Even when the teachers were compelled to hold the learners' hands to the shock plate, 30% continued to administer the shocks. Milgram's results point out that many people can commit a variety of costly, harmful, and even immoral actions if role pressure is severe enough.

Different social roles usually are associated with different degrees of status. Status can be thought of as the degree to which an individual's contribution is crucial to the success and prestige of the group, how much power and control over outcomes that individual has, and the extent to which the person embodies some idealized or admired characteristic (such as being physically attractive). In many subhuman and some human groups, status is determined by physical dominance. In other groups, status may be determined by wealth, education, or any other determinant the group deems valuable.

Although status and power ordinarily go hand in hand, they need not. In a series of experiments, Johnson and Allen (1972) separated status and power from each other. They found that having high status and high power in an organization results in an enhanced self-perception that leads to altruistic behavior but disdain for the worker. On the other hand, when an individual has high status but low power in an organization that rewards high power, he or she engages in selfish behavior (usually by deviating from the prescribed norms in order to increase his or her own rewards) but has respect for the workers.

Whatever determines status within a certain group, status differences have a number of important effects on group processes. High-status individuals are likely to be valued by the group and treated more tolerantly. These group members, therefore, often are less affected by group norms and peer pressure than are lower-status members, in part because high-status individuals are less likely to expect punishment for their improper actions (Johnson & Allen, 1972). High-status members also have disproportionately strong influence over group decisions and judgments, whereas those low in status tend to be ignored, even when they offer intelligent and creative advice. In fact, a situation in which a low-status person has a critical insight or piece of information but is ignored by the rest of the decision-making group is not uncommon.

Norms: Integration of Members' Actions

Whereas roles differentiate members' rights and obligations from one another, norms integrate the actions of all group members. **Norms** are rules, implicit or explicit, established by groups to regulate the behavior of all members. Norms tell group members how to behave, or how not to behave, in various situations. In short, the norms of a group are the group's common belief regarding appropriate behavior, attitudes, and perceptions for its members. These prescribed modes of conduct and belief not only guide the behavior of group members but also help group interaction by specifying the kinds of responses that are expected and acceptable in particular situations. Norms thus provide a basis for predicting the behavior of other members and serve as a guide for a member's own behavior.

All groups have norms, and they may be set formally or informally. A group of students who party together, for example, often has common ideas about what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior at a party. More formally organized groups, such as classes, have norms about absence, tardiness, accomplishment of assigned work, and appropriate times to speak. In any group, some norms specify the behavior expected of all group members and others apply only to individuals in specific roles. In the classroom, for instance, some norms govern both the teacher's and the students' behavior, but others may apply only to the teacher or only to the students. Because norms refer to the expected behavior sanctioned by a group, they have an "ought to" or "must" quality: Group members must not disrupt the group's work, group members ought to participate in discussions, and so on.

The norms of any group vary in importance. Norms that have a low effect on the objectives and values of the group usually allow for a greater range of behavior and bring less severe pressures for members to conform than do norms more relevant to group functioning. Because most groups insist on adherence to their norms as a basic requirement for membership, individuals wishing to join or remain in specific groups generally follow these "rules of the game." If they do not, they soon may find themselves on the outside looking in.

For a group norm to influence a person's behavior, the person must recognize that it exists, be aware that other group members accept and follow the norm, and accept and follow it him- or herself. A regulation that all members should be on time for group meetings, for example, becomes a norm only to the extent that the individual group member accepts it, sees other group members accepting it, and sees them enforcing the regulation among themselves. At first a person may conform to a group norm because the group typically rewards conforming behavior and punishes nonconforming behavior. Later the person may internalize the norm and conform to it automatically, even when no other group members are present.

Norms cannot be imposed on a group. Instead, they develop out of the interaction among group members. This concept of norms being social products was demonstrated ingeniously by Muzafer Sherif in 1936. When a fixed point of light is viewed in total darkness, it appears to move spontaneously, a perceptual phenomenon known as the

autokinetic effect. Sherif utilized this phenomenon to study how group norms develop and how group members come to form coherent, shared beliefs about new events. Leading individuals into a totally dark room, Sherif turned on a tiny light and asked participants, first individually and then in groups, to note how much the light moved. When tested in groups, the participants reached consensus in their judgments on the amount of movement. Sherif, however, was able to increase or decrease subjects' estimates of movement dramatically if he paid accomplices to offer particularly large or small estimates. Once a group decision was made about how much the light was moving, the norm persisted even when the group was not present. That is, individual participants continued to use the group judgment as a frame of reference to evaluate the perceived movement of the light. The important lesson Sherif's study demonstrates is many of the judgments and values that seem to belong to individual group members actually are shaped by the judgments of other group members.

Another classic study about the effect of group norms on the beliefs and values of group members was conducted by Theodore Newcomb in 1943. Born in 1903, Newcomb was a pioneer of social psychology and a cofounder of the social psychology program at the University of Michigan. He conducted a number of studies on how the college experience affected students, the most famous of which was his study of group norms at Bennington College. The students, all females from mostly well-to-do and politically conservative families, lived in a community where most of the faculty and older students were somewhat materialistic and politically liberal. A majority of the Bennington students became progressively more liberal over their careers, but some did not. Newcomb was able to relate the student's ultimate political orientation to the group she identified with—liberal if she thought of herself as primarily a member of the campus community and conservative if her primary identification was with her family. Newcomb's study marks the point where the study of reference groups began. A **reference group** is a group people identify with, compare their attitudes to, and use as a means of evaluating those attitudes.

CREATING PRODUCTIVE GROUPS

Although this discussion of structure, rules, and norms may suggest the opposite, there is nothing magical about working in a group. Some groups are highly effective and achieve amazing goals, while others are highly ineffective and waste everyone's time. The authors have studied various types of groups for more than thirty years. We have interviewed thousands of members in a wide variety of organizations in a number of different countries to discover how groups are being used and where and how groups work best. Using our research and the findings of other researchers, such as Katzenbach and Smith (1993), we have developed a group performance curve to clarify the difference between ineffective and effective groups (Figure 1.2). Four types of groups appear on the curve: pseudogroups, traditional work groups, effective groups, and high-performance groups. The performance curve begins with the individual members of the group and portrays their performance relative to each group type. The purpose of the curve is to illustrate that the productiveness of any small group depends on how the group is structured (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993).

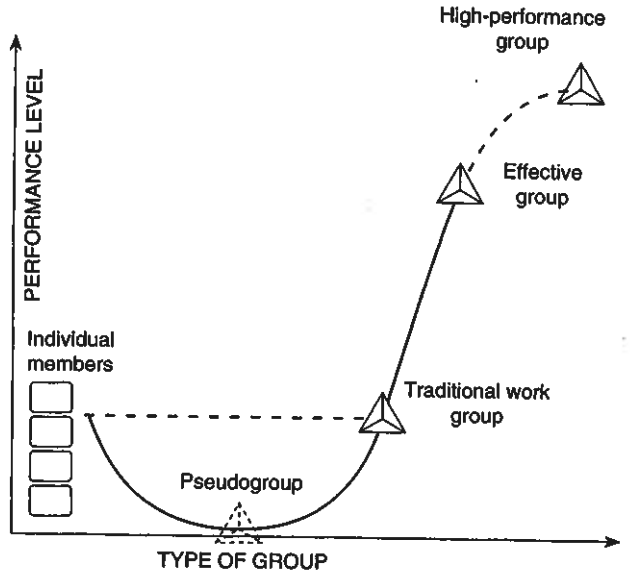


Figure 1.2 The group performance curve.

As the following explanations of the four groups featured on the performance curve point out, groups can be created in a variety of ways and for a multitude of reasons. In those very roots of group development, though, may also lie many of the reasons why one group is productive and another group is not. Attention must be paid to the reasons for the group's existence, its structure, and its motivations.

A **pseudogroup** is a group whose members have been assigned to work together but who have no interest in doing so. They believe they will be evaluated by being ranked from the highest performer to the lowest performer. Although members talk to one another, they actually are competing. They see one another as rivals who must be defeated, block or interfere with one another's performance, hide information, attempt to mislead and confuse, and distrust one another. As a result, the sum of the whole is less than the sum of the potential of the individual members. In other words, members would be more productive if they were working alone. Furthermore, the group does not mature because members have no interest in or commitment to one another or to the group's future. An example of a pseudogroup might be a regional sales team that is told to work together to increase profits, only to find out that the top salesperson will receive three times the bonus any other team member will receive.

A **traditional work group** is a group whose members are assigned to work together and accept that they have to do so. Members believe that they will be evaluated and rewarded as individuals, not as members of the group. The work is structured so that very little joint work is required. Members interact primarily to clarify how the work is to be done. They seek one another's information but have no motivation to inform their groupmates. Members are accountable as separate individuals, not as members of a

team. Some members loaf, seeking a free ride on the efforts of their more conscientious groupmates. The conscientious members then feel exploited and do less. The result is the sum of the whole is more than the sum of the potential of some of the members, but the more hard-working and conscientious members would perform better if they worked alone. An example of this might be a study group designated by the teacher, in which some students do research for an upcoming test while others do nothing.

An **effective group** is more than the sum of its parts. It is a group whose members commit themselves to maximizing their own and one another's success. Members are assigned to work together, and they are happy to do so. They believe their success depends on the efforts of all group members. An effective group has a number of defining characteristics, including positive interdependence that unites members to achieve clear operational goals, two-way communication, distributed leadership, and power based on expertise. In addition, effective groups feature a decision-making process that allows group members to challenge one another's information and reasoning and to resolve conflicts constructively. Members of effective groups hold one another accountable to do their fair share of the work, promote one another's success, appropriately engage in small-group skills, and determine how effectively they are working together.

A **high-performance group** meets all the criteria for an effective group and outperforms all reasonable expectations, given its membership. What differentiates a high-performance group from an effective group is the level of commitment members have to one another and to the group's success. Jennifer Futernick, who is part of a high-performance, rapid-response team at McKinsey & Company, calls the emotion binding

Types of Groups

Demonstrate your understanding of the different types of groups by matching the definitions with the appropriate group. Find a partner and check your answers; explain why you believe your answers to be correct.

	Type of Group	Definition
____	Pseudogroup	a. A group in which members work together to accomplish shared goals. Members perceive that they can reach their goals if and only if the other group members also reach their goals.
____	Traditional group	b. A group whose members have been assigned to work together but who have no interest in doing so. The structure promotes competition at close quarters.
____	Effective group	c. A group that meets all the criteria for being an effective group and outperforms all reasonable expectations, given its membership.
____	High-performance group	d. A group whose members agree to work together but see little benefit from doing so. The structure promotes individualistic work with talking.

her teammates together a form of love (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Ken Hoepner of the Burlington Northern Intermodal Team (also described by Katzenbach & Smith, 1993) stated, "Not only did we trust each other, not only did we respect each other, but we gave a damn about the rest of the people on this team. If we saw somebody vulnerable, we were there to help." As these examples demonstrate, members' mutual concern for one another's personal growth enables high-performance groups to perform far above expectations and also to have a lot of fun. Unfortunately, high-performance groups are rare; most groups never achieve this level of development.

EXERCISE 1.4

Saving the World from Dracula

A problem-solving situation is used to provide an introduction to group dynamics.

1. Form heterogeneous groups of four.
2. Read the situation sheet, "The Danger of Dracula."
3. Create a plan of attack to stop Count Dracula from initiating a new reign of terror by vampires. Rank the items listed on the "Saving the World from Dracula Ranking Sheet." Your *goal* is to rank items from most important (1) to least important (12) and write out a rationale as to why you ranked the items as you did.
   a. Working by yourself, *individually*, rank the items from most important (1) to least important (12). Write out a rationale explaining your ranking.
   b. Working *cooperatively* in your group, rank the items again, coming to consensus. Write out a rationale explaining the group's ranking. There should be one ranking and rationale from the group.
4. Score your own and your group's ranking (see p. 572 in Appendix for answer key):
   a. Compute the absolute difference (ignore plus and minus signs) between your individual ranking and the experts' ranking.
   b. Compute the absolute difference (ignore plus and minus signs) between your group's ranking and the experts' ranking.
   c. A perfect ranking will have a score of zero. The lower your score, the more accurate your ranking. The criteria for success are:
      0–20 Excellent
      21–30 Good
      31–40 Poor
      41+ Terrible
5. When the group has solved the problem, answer the following questions:
   a. What is the group's goal?
   b. What were the patterns of communication among group members?
   c. How did leadership emerge in the group? Who provided what types of leadership in your group?
   d. What determined how influential each member was in the group?
   e. What method of decision making was used, and how effective was it?
   f. Why or why not did members challenge each other's conclusions?
   g. What conflicts arose among group members and how were they managed?
   h. How do you simultaneously participate in a group and observe the processes the group uses to complete its tasks?

i. What actions by group members helped and what actions hindered the team in completing its task?

THE DANGER OF DRACULA

You are a group of scientists who specialize in public health. Your mandate is to prevent epidemics and threats to the general health of the public. Your current concern is the possibility of a proliferation of vampires resulting from the release of Count Dracula from his grave, where he has been trapped for over a hundred years.

Voivode Dracula (1431–1476) was Vlad III, Prince of Wallachia (a province of Romania bordered to the north by Transylvania and Moldavia, to the east by the Black Sea, and to the south by Bulgaria). He was known as a brilliant, courageous, cunning, and clever general who defeated the Turkish army. He was also known as Vlad the Impaler, for impaling tens of thousands of victims on sharpened stakes. In 1459, on St. Bartholomew's Day, for example, Dracula had 30,000 of the citizens of the city of Brasov impaled, arranging the stakes in various geometric formations in front of the city. He was also a noted statesman and scholar. His mighty brain, iron resolution, and immense cruelty made him a formidable adversary. Although he supposedly was killed in battle in 1476 by the Turks, it soon became apparent that he had become a vampire. He adopted the title of count and terrorized that region of Europe until he was imprisoned in his grave in the late 1800s by a team of English scientists and adventurers. The exact whereabouts of his grave were hidden to prevent any misguided soul from freeing him.

Archaeologists excavating an ancient castle in Transylvania have uncovered Count Dracula's crypt and coffin. They plan to open the casket, and when they do they will release Count Dracula once more into the world. Not believing in the danger, the archaeologists are inviting television crews to film the opening, hoping the publicity will help them raise money. You, however, know the truth. Vampires do exist, and once released, Count Dracula will create at least five more vampires a day, each of whom will in turn create five more vampires a day. In a very short time, vampires could be terrorizing the whole world. Your group has the responsibility of preventing this world disaster by destroying Count Dracula before he can begin. Your plan must include

a. The procedures you will use to destroy Dracula
b. The procedures you will use to protect yourself from Dracula
c. A description of Dracula's strengths and weaknesses that must be overcome and exploited
d. The time of day Dracula will be destroyed

Pooling the resources of your group, you have 12 relevant items. **Your task is to rank these items according to their importance to your quest to prevent a reign of terror by Count Dracula,** starting with 1 for the most important item and ending with 12 for the least important item.

How to Destroy Dracula	Protection Procedures	Dracula's Strengths and Weaknesses	When (Time) We Will Destroy Dracula

SAVING THE WORLD FROM DRACULA RANKING SHEET

Rank the following items according to their importance for saving the world from Dracula, starting with 1 for the most important to 12 for the least important.

1	2	3	4	2–4	3–4
Item	Your Ranking	Group Ranking	Experts' Ranking	Individual Difference Scores	Group Difference Scores
1. Oak stake					
2. Diagram/map of Dracula's castle and key to Dracula's crypt					
3. Human ability to cooperate					
4. Table detailing sunrise and sunset in Transylvania					
5. 44-Magnum revolver and shells					
6. Branch of wild rose					
7. Sharp ax and several cloves of garlic					
8. Tickets: plane to Budapest, train to Transylvania, car to castle					
9. Collapsible steel cage					
10. Cross, holy water, communion wafers					
11. Two high-intensity flashlights					
12. Herbs mixed by a witch at midnight under a full moon					
Total					

EXERCISE 1.5

Developing an Effective Group

The purpose of this exercise is to give participants some practice in planning how to develop an effective group. The procedure for the exercise is as follows:

1. The class forms groups of four.
2. Groups read and discuss the Sinking Boat Situation, and then answer the following questions about the situation:
   a. Which alternative would you choose if you were there?
   b. Which alternative would you want your companions to choose?
   c. What kind of people would you want as companions in such a situation?
   d. What should the goals of the group be?
   e. How should leadership be managed?
   f. Who should have the most power in making decisions?
   g. What decision-making procedure should be used?
   h. How should conflicts be managed?
3. Each group decides whether its answers to the preceding questions are indicative of an effective or an ineffective group.
4. Each group shares its answers with the rest of the class.

SINKING BOAT SITUATION

On a dark summer night, seven people cling to a swamped and slowly sinking boat on a black tropical sea. They are not alone. A large shark glides below them, and soon, perhaps, there will be more. With fear thick in their salt-swollen throats, the seven are faced with a difficult choice. If they kick in unison, they may be able to fight the fierce current and tides driving them away from the shore and all make it to safety; if they stick together they have an equal chance to survive or drown. If they split up, each going it alone, one or two of the stronger swimmers might make it to safety, but the majority will certainly drown or be devoured by sharks.

HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE GROUP

I will pay more for the ability to deal with people than for any other ability under the sun.

John D. Rockefeller

Having established that not all groups are effective, and having discussed some of the reasons why being a part of effective groups is so important, we will now dig a bit deeper into the specifics of how to create an effective group. To be effective overall, a group must do three things: achieve its goals; maintain good working relationships among members; and adapt to changing conditions in the surrounding organization, society, and world. To create such a group you should use the following set of guidelines. These guidelines provide direction for building an effective group, a framework for diagnosing how well a group is functioning, and a means for motivating group members to improve. For further clarification, Table 1.1 lists the guidelines and Table 1.2 offers a comparison of effective and ineffective groups.

Guideline 1: Establish clear, operational, and relevant group goals that create positive interdependence and evoke a high level of commitment from every member. Groups exist for a reason: People want to achieve goals they are unable to achieve by themselves. In effective groups, goals must be stated clearly so that all members understand the nature of the goals. Additionally, goals must be operational so that members understand how to achieve them. Goals also must be relevant to members' needs, so that they commit themselves to achieving the goals. Finally, the group's goals must create positive interdependence among members. Group goals and social interdependence are discussed in Chapter 3.

Guideline 2: Establish effective two-way communication by which group members communicate their ideas and feelings accurately and clearly. Communication is the basis for all human interaction and group functioning, and it is especially important when groups of people are working toward a common goal. Group members must send and receive messages effectively in order to exchange information and transmit meaning. Effective communication also can decrease misunderstandings and discord among group members. Effective communication depends on minimalizing competition among members and establishing two-way communication. Communication among group members is discussed in Chapter 4.

Guideline 3: Ensure that leadership and participation are distributed among all group members. All members of a group are responsible for providing leadership. Equal participation and leadership ensures that all members are invested in the group's work, committed to implementing the group's decisions, and satisfied with their membership. Shared leadership and participation also enables the group as a whole to use the resources of every individual, thereby increasing the cohesiveness of the group. Leadership is discussed in Chapter 5.

Table 1.1 **Guidelines for Creating Effective Groups**

1. Establish clear, operational, relevant group goals that create positive interdependence and evoke a high level of commitment from every member.
2. Establish effective two-way communication within which group members communicate their ideas and feelings accurately and clearly.
3. Ensure that leadership and participation are distributed among all group members.
4. Ensure that the use of power is distributed among group members and that patterns of influence vary according to the needs of the group as members strive to achieve their mutual goals.
5. Match the method of decision making with (a) the availability of time and resources, (b) the size and seriousness of the decision, and (c) the amount of member commitment needed to implement decision. The most effective way of making a decision is usually by consensus.
6. Encourage structured controversies in which group members advocate their views, disagree, and challenge each other's conclusions and reasoning in order to create high-quality, creative decisions.
7. Ensure that members face their conflicts of interests and use integrative negotiations and mediation to resolve them constructively.

Table 1.2 **Comparison of Effective and Ineffective Groups**

Effective Groups	Ineffective Groups
Goals are clarified and modified so that the best possible match between an individual's goals and the group's goals is achieved; goals are structured cooperatively so all members are committed to achieving them.	Members accept imposed goals; goals are competitively structured so that each member strives to outperform the others.
Communication is two-way, and the open and accurate expression of both ideas and feelings is emphasized.	Communication is one-way, and only ideas are expressed; feelings are suppressed or ignored.
Participation and leadership are distributed among all group members; goal accomplishment, internal maintenance, and developmental change are underscored.	Leadership is delegated and based on authority; participation is unequal, with high-power members dominating; only goal accomplishment is emphasized.
Ability and information determine influence and power; contracts are built to make sure that individuals' goals and needs are fulfilled; power is equalized and shared.	Position determines power; power is concentrated in the authority system; obedience to authority is the rule.
Decision-making procedures are matched with the situation; different methods are used at different times; consensus is sought for important decisions; involvement and group discussions are encouraged.	Decisions are always made by the highest authority; there is little group discussion; members' involvement is minimal.
Structured controversy in which members advocate their views and challenge each other's information and reasoning is seen as the key to high quality and creative decision making and problem solving.	Disagreement among members is suppressed and avoided; quick compromises are sought to eliminate arguing; groupthink is prevalent.
Conflicts of interest are resolved through integrative negotiations and mediation so agreements are reached that maximize joint outcomes and leave all members satisfied.	Conflicts of interest are resolved through distributive negotiations or avoidance; some members win and some members lose or else conflict is ignored and everyone is unhappy.
Interpersonal, group, and intergroup skills are stressed; cohesion is advanced through high levels of inclusion, affection, acceptance, support, and trust; individuality is endorsed.	The functions of group members are stressed; individuality is deemphasized; cohesion is ignored; rigid conformity is promoted.

Guideline 4: Ensure that power is distributed among group members and that patterns of influence vary according to the needs of the group. In effective groups, members' power is based on expertise, ability, and access to information, not on authority or personality characteristics. Power struggles among group members can distract the group from its purpose and goals, ultimately making the group useless. To prevent power struggles, every member of the group must have some power of influence in some part of group work. As a group evolves and new goals are set, the distribution of power also needs to evolve. To this end, group members should form coalitions that help fulfill personal goals on the basis of mutual influence and interdependence. Power is discussed in Chapter 6.

Guideline 5: Match decision-making procedures with the needs of the situation. Groups can make decisions in a variety of ways, but there must be a balance between the time and resources a group has available and the method of decision making it uses. A jury deciding a death penalty case, for example, would require a unanimous decision, whereas a church group deciding when to hold its next meeting may not. Balance also is needed among the size and seriousness of the decision, the commitment needed to put it into practice, and the method used for making the decision. The most effective way of making a decision usually is by consensus (unanimous agreement). Consensus promotes distributed participation, the equalization of power, constructive controversy, cohesion, involvement, and commitment. Decision making is discussed in Chapter 7.

Guideline 6: Engage in constructive controversy by disagreeing and challenging one another's conclusions and reasoning, thus promoting creative decision making and problem solving. In order to make effective decisions, members must present the best case possible for each major course of action and subject all other alternatives to critical analysis. Controversies over opposing ideas and conclusions are beneficial for groups, because they promote involvement in the group's work, quality and creativity in decision making, and commitment to implementing the group's decisions. Controversies also help ensure that minority and dissenting opinions receive serious discussion and consideration. Controversy and creativity are discussed in Chapter 8.

Guideline 7: Face your conflicts and resolve them in constructive ways. Conflicts of interest may result from incompatible needs or goals, scarce resources, and competitiveness. Five basic strategies can be used to manage conflicts of interest: withdrawal, forcing (win–lose negotiations), smoothing, compromise, and problem solving (integrative negotiations). Members of effective groups face their conflicts and engage in integrative problem-solving negotiations to resolve them. When problem-solving negotiations fail, mediation may occur. When they are resolved constructively, conflicts are an important and indispensable aspect of increasing group effectiveness. Conflicts of interest are discussed in Chapter 9.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GROUPS OVER TIME

All groups change over time. The kinds of developmental changes seen in most groups have been described by well over one hundred theories. Most of these theories have taken one of two approaches: **recurring-phase theories** and **sequential-stage theories.** (Hill & Gruner, 1973; Shambaugh, 1978). Recurring-phase theories focus on the issues that dominate group interaction again and again. Robert Freed Bales (1965), for example, stated that equilibrium has to exist between task-oriented work and emotional expressions to build better relationships among group members. The group tends to oscillate between these two concerns, sometimes striving for more solidarity and sometimes striving for a more work-oriented focus. Wilfred Bion's (1961) recurring-phase theory stated that groups focus on three basic themes: dependency on the leader, pairing among members for emotional support, and fight-flight reactions to a threat to the group. William Schultz (1962) proposed that group development occurs as members concern themselves with three issues—affection, inclusion, and control.

Sequential-stage theories discuss the typical order of the phases of group development. Richard Moreland and John Levine (1982, 1988) suggested that group members

go through predictable, sequential stages of membership: prospective member, new member, full member, marginal member, and ex-member. At each stage, the member is concerned with a different aspect of group life. For example, the new member attempts to change the group to meet his or her needs while the group attempts to mold the new member to fit the group's needs. Later on, the full member engages in role negotiation in order to find a niche that is most comfortable.

Another famous sequential-stage theory, offered by Worchel, Coutant-Sassic, and Grossman (1992), proposed six stages to group development. The initial stage is discontent, when individuals feel that their present group(s) are not meeting their needs. The second stage is a precipitating event that brings members together. In the third stage, members begin to identify with the group. In the fourth stage, attention turns to group productivity. In the fifth stage, attention shifts to the individual group member, who negotiates with the group to expand task efforts to meet personal goals. In the sixth and final stage, the group begins to disintegrate.

Probably the most famous sequential-stage theory was formulated by Bruce W. Tuckman (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Tuckman reviewed over fifty studies on group development conducted in a variety of settings (mostly therapy and training groups of limited duration). Although the description of the stages the groups went through varied widely on the surface, Tuckman found a surprising amount of agreement beneath the diversity and hypothesized five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning.

Tuckman theorized that groups focus on specific issues at each of the five stages, and this focus influences members' behaviors. The *forming stage* is a period of uncertainty in which members try to determine their place in the group and the procedures and rules of the group. Conflicts begin to arise during the *storming stage* as members resist the influence of the group and rebel against accomplishing the task. Members often confront their various differences, and conflict management becomes the focus of attention. During the *norming stage,* the group establishes some consensus regarding a role structure and group norms for appropriate behavior. Cohesion and commitment increase. In the *performing stage,* the group members become proficient in working together to achieve the group's goals and more flexible in patterns of working together. The group disbands in the *adjourning stage.* Of all the sequential-stage theories, Tuckman's seems the most useful and has created the most interest.

Virtually all the studies that Tuckman reviewed involved group leaders who were passive and nondirective and who made no attempt to intervene in the group process. Most groups, however, have a coordinator, team leader, or instructor who tries to ensure that the group functions productively. In applying Tuckman's conclusions to such groups, the authors (with the help of Roger Johnson and other colleagues) identified seven stages of development: (1) defining and structuring procedures, (2) conforming to procedures and getting acquainted, (3) recognizing mutuality and building trust, (4) rebelling and differentiating, (5) committing to and taking ownership for the goals, procedures, and other members, (6) functioning maturely and productively, and (7) terminating. Each of these stages is discussed in turn.

Defining and Structuring Procedures

When a group begins, the members are usually concerned about what is expected of them and the nature of the group's goals. Group members want to know what is going to happen; what is expected of them; whether or not they will be accepted, influential, and liked; how the group is going to function; and who the other group members are. Group members expect the coordinator to explain how the group is to function in a way that reassures them that their personal needs will be met. When a group first meets, therefore, the coordinator should define the procedures to be used, define the group's goals, establish the interdependence among members, and generally organize the group and announce the beginning of the group's work.

Summary of the Coordinator's Role

1. Introduce, define, and structure the group.
2. Clarify procedures, reinforce members for conforming to the procedures, and help members become acquainted.
3. Emphasize and highlight the positive interdependence among group members, and encourage them to engage in both trusting and trustworthy behaviors.
4. Accept the rebellion by and differentiation among group members as a normal process. Use integrative negotiations to help members establish their independence from another and the prescribed procedures.
5. Help members commit themselves to and take ownership of the group's goals and procedures.
6. Be a consultant to the group, providing resources for the group to function effectively.
7. Signal termination and help the members move on to future groups.

Conforming to Procedures and Getting Acquainted

As group members follow the prescribed procedures and interact around the task, they become acquainted with one another and familiarize themselves with the procedures until they can follow them easily. They also learn the strengths and weaknesses of the other group members. During this stage the group members are dependent on the coordinator for direction and clarification of the group's goals and procedures. The coordinator should also stress the following group norms: (1) take responsibility for one's own performance and the performance of the other members of the group, (2) provide help and assistance to other members, (3) respond to other members in an accepting, supportive, and trustworthy way, (4) make decisions through consensus, and (5) confront and solve problems in group functioning. During this stage the goals and procedures of the group are the coordinator's. The group members conform to the prescribed procedures and interact with one another, but they are not committed personally to the group's goals and each other.

Recognizing Mutuality and Building Trust

The third stage of group development is marked by group members recognizing their interdependence and building trust. A sense of mutuality is built as group members

recognize they "sink or swim together." Members begin to take responsibility for one another's performance and appropriate behavior. Trust is built through disclosing one's thoughts, ideas, conclusions, and feelings, and having the other group members respond with acceptance, support, and reciprocation of the disclosures. Trust is discussed at length in Chapter 3 and in Johnson (2003).

Rebelling and Differentiating

Relationships among group members are often built through a cycle of establishing independence and becoming friendly, then differentiating themselves from each other through conflict, and finally committing themselves to a relationship. The fourth stage of group development is marked by group members rebelling against the coordinator and procedures and differentiating themselves from one another through disagreements and conflicts. On the road to maturity a group will go through a period (sometimes short, sometimes long) of challenging the authority of the coordinator. This is an ordinary occurrence in group development and should be expected. This swing toward independence contrasts sharply with the dependence demonstrated by members during stage 2. Group members may wish to test and challenge the coordinator's sincerity and commitment or attempt to establish their independence by doing the opposite of the group procedures.

Rebelling and differentiating are important methods by which group members establish boundaries and autonomy (Johnson, 1979, 1980a). As they are natural parts of the development process, the coordinator needs to deal with both in an open and accepting way. Some advice for doing so includes the following:

1. Do not tighten control and try to force conformity to prescribed procedures, reason and negotiate.
2. Confront and problem solve when members become counterdependent and rebellious.
3. Mediate conflicts among members helping the group establish members' autonomy and individuality.
4. Work toward members taking ownership of the procedures and committing themselves to one another's success.

Coordinating a group at this stage is like teaching a child to ride a bicycle: One runs alongside to prevent the child from falling, but one must let loose so the child can learn to balance on his or her own.

Committing to the Group's Goals, Procedures, and Members

During this stage, dependence on the coordinator is replaced by dependence on the other members of the group, and conformity to the prescribed procedures is replaced by personal commitment to the collaborative nature of the experience. The group shifts from being the coordinator's group to being the members' group. Group norms become internalized and motivation becomes intrinsic rather than extrinsic. Group members promote each other's efforts to achieve the group's goals and provide each other with support and assistance.

Functioning Maturely and Productively

As the group achieves maturity, autonomy, and productivity, a group identity emerges. Group members collaborate to achieve goals while ensuring that their relationships with each other are maintained at a high-quality level. The coordinator becomes a consultant to the group rather than a directive leader. The relationships among group members continue to improve, as does the relationship between the coordinator and the members. In the maturely functioning group, all the guidelines for effective groups are met. Many groups never reach this stage.

Terminating

The life of every group is finite. Goals are met, projects are finished, and the group members go their separate ways. For groups that have matured into cohesive, effective groups, where strong emotional bonds exist among group members, the termination of the group may be quite upsetting. Nevertheless, group members deal with the problems of separating so that they can leave the group experience behind them and move on to new experiences.

Length of Each Stage

Not all stages last the same amount of time. Many groups move very quickly through the first five stages, spend considerable time functioning maturely, and then terminate quickly. Other groups never seem to progress past the rebelling and differentiating stage. The average amount of time groups tend to spend in each stage is presented in Figure 1.3.

Conclusion

Both the sequential-stage and the recurring-phase perspectives are useful for understanding group development and they are not contradictory. A group may move through various stages while dealing with basic themes that surface as they become relevant to

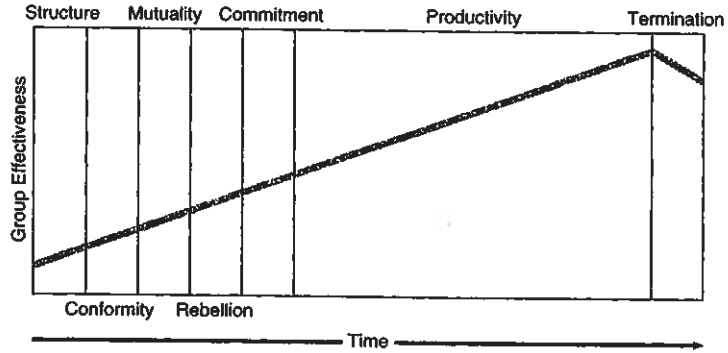


Figure 1.3 Stages of group development.

the group's work. Because the issues underlying the themes are never completely resolved, they can recur later.

EXERCISE 16

Are Groups Beneficial or Harmful?

Some controversy exists over whether group membership is constructive or destructive. The purpose of this exercise is to structure a critical discussion of the issue.

1. **Assignment to Groups:** Assign participants to groups of four. Each group is to write a short statement summarizing and explaining its position on whether individual or group decision making is more effective.
2. **Assignment to Pairs and Positions:** Divide each group into two pairs:
   a. Pair One takes the position that individuals are superior to groups in making decisions and uses Briefing Sheet One.
   b. Pair Two takes the position that groups are superior to individuals in making decisions and uses Briefing Sheet Two.
3. Participants review the procedure and guidelines for constructive controversy.
4. Conduct the exercise and monitor participants to ensure that the procedures are skillfully followed.
5. Participants process their experience.

TASKS

1. Make the best case possible for your assigned position. Ensure it gets a fair and complete hearing.
2. Critically analyze and challenge the opposing positions. Ensure the information and logic stands up under critical scrutiny.
3. Reach a consensus on the group's best reasoned judgment about the issue.

PROCEDURE

1. **Prepare Positions:** Working with your partner, prepare a persuasive presentation that makes the best case possible for your assigned position. The presentation should have three parts: a thesis statement (your position), a rationale (your information organized in a logically compelling way), and a conclusion (your position). In preparing your presentation, use the overview of social-psychological research, applicable text material, and what you know from other sources. You have ten minutes to prepare a forceful and persuasive three-minute presentation and your arguments for the open discussion. Both members of the pair have to be ready to give the presentation.
2. **Present Positions:** Meet with a person representing the opposing position. Give a three-minute presentation of the best case possible for your position. Be persuasive. Listen to the other person's three-minute presentation; take notes and ask for clarification of anything that is not fully understood.
3. **Advocate, Attack, and Defend Discussion:** Continue to advocate the best case possible for your position. Critically analyze and challenge the opposing position. Point out the shortcomings in its information and logic. Defend your position from the attacks of the opponent. The discussion should focus on theory, research, and facts, not on opinions and impressions. You have ten minutes to discuss the issue.
4. **Reverse Perspectives:** Give a two-minute presentation of the best case possible for the opposing position. Summarize the opposing position (information and logic). The summary should be complete and accurate. Add any additional information you may have that supports the opposing position. Listen to the opponent's presentation of your position and correct anything that is incorrectly understood.
5. **Write a Joint Report:** Drop all advocacy. Reach a consensus on the nature of your best reasoned judgment about the issue. Write one statement summarizing and explaining your joint conclusions on whether individual or group decision making is more effective. The best reasoning from both sides should be synthesized or integrated into your best reasoned judgment. Base your conclusions on theory, research, and facts.

RULES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE CONTROVERSY

1. I am critical of ideas, not individuals. I challenge and refute the ideas of the opposing pair, but I do not indicate that I personally reject the members of the pair.
2. I focus on reaching the best decision possible, not on "winning." I remember that we are all in this together.
3. I encourage everyone to participate and to master all the relevant information.
4. I listen to everyone's ideas, even if I don't agree.
5. I paraphrase or restate what someone has said if it is not clear to me.
6. I first bring out all the ideas and facts supporting both sides, and then I try to put them together in a way that makes sense.
7. I try to understand both sides of the issue.
8. I change my mind when the evidence indicates that I should do so.

BRIEFING SHEET ONE: GROUPS ARE GOOD FOR HUMANS

1. Under most conditions, the productivity of groups is higher than the productivity of individuals working alone.
2. Groups make more effective decisions and solve problems more effectively than individuals working alone.
3. It is through group memberships that the values of altruism, kindness, consideration for others, responsibility, and so forth are socialized in us.
4. The quality of emotional life in terms of friendship, love, camaraderie, excitement, joy, fulfillment, and achievement is greater for members of groups than for individuals acting alone.
5. The quality of everyday life is higher in groups because of the advantages of specialization and division of labor. Our material standard of living—for example, our housing, food, clothing, transportation, entertainment, and so forth—would not be possible for a person living outside of a society.
6. Conflicts are managed more productively in groups. Social influence is better managed in groups. Without group standards, social values, and laws, civilization would be impossible.
7. A person's identity, self-esteem, and social competencies are shaped by the groups of significance to him or her.
8. Without cooperation, social organization, and groups of various kinds, humans would not survive. Humans have a basic social nature, and our survival and evolution are the results of the effectiveness of our groups.

9. Friendship, love, companionship, meaning, purpose, cooperation, and all that is good in life occur in groups.

BRIEFING SHEET TWO: GROUPS ARE NOT GOOD FOR HUMANS

1. People in groups are more likely to take greater risks than they would alone. Groups tend to take more extreme positions and indulge in more extreme behavior than their members would alone.
2. In groups there is sometimes a diffusion of responsibility such that members take less responsibility for providing assistance to someone in need or for rewarding good service.
3. In large groups individuals can become anonymous and therefore feel freer to engage in rowdy, shocking, and illegal behavior. When one member engages in impulsive and antisocial behavior, others may do likewise. Riots are often initiated and worsened by such modeling effects.
4. Being identified as part of a group may increase the tendency of nonmembers to treat one in impersonal and inhumane ways. It is easier, for example, to drop a bomb on the "enemy" than on a person.
5. Group contagion often gives rise to collective panic.
6. Millions of people have been swept into mass political movements only to become unhappy victims of the distorted visions of their leaders.
7. Groups often influence their members to conform. One type of conformity, obedience to authority, can cause a person to act in cruel and inhumane ways to others. The identity of the individual can be threatened when conformity is too extreme.
8. It is within groups that injustice, abuse, bullying, stereotypes, scapegoating, and all antisocial actions occur.

THE FIELD OF GROUP DYNAMICS

Close cooperation between theorists and practitioners can be accomplished . . . if the theorist does not look toward applied problems with highbrow aversion or with a fear of social problems, and if the applied psychologist realizes that there is nothing so practical as a good theory.

Kurt Lewin (1951, p. 169)

Understanding of the field of group dynamics is not complete until one understands (1) its roots in theory, research, and practice and (2) the nature of the field's primary founder, **Kurt Lewin.**

Like all scientific fields, the field of group dynamics is a combination of theory, research, and practice. Theory identifies the characteristics of effective groups, research validates or disconfirms the theories, and practical procedures based on the validated theory are implemented in the "real world" to see if they work. The theory, research, and practical applications of group dynamics are not separate and succinct processes, they all interact and enhance each other (Figure 1.4). Theory both guides and summarizes research. Research validates or disconfirms theory, thereby leading to its refinement and modification. Practice is guided by validated theory, and practical applications

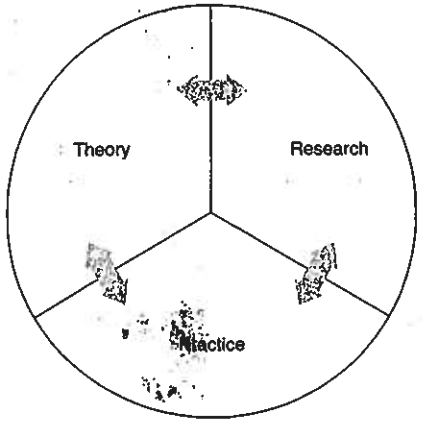


Figure 1.4 Relationship among theory, research, and practice.
Source: D. W. Johnson & R. T. Johnson, *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research* (Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company, 1989). Reprinted with permission of the authors.

of the theory reveal inadequacies that lead to refining of the theory, conducting new research studies, and modifying the application. This book emphasizes the interaction among theory, research, and practice.

Theory	Guides and summarizes research.
Research	Validates or disconfirms theory, thereby leading to its refinement and modification.
Practice	Guided by validated theory. Applications of the theory reveal inadequacies that lead to refining of the theory, conducting new research studies, and modifying the application.

What happens among group members is dynamic, not static. Social scientists interested in groups analyze the dynamics within groups by constructing theories and conducting research to test the theories. They then apply the validated theory to real-world situations to see if they work.

History of the Field of Group Dynamics

The study of group dynamics is a relatively young field, one that is rooted in a wide range of traditionally separate fields. Although the earliest existing philosophical literature contains a great deal of wisdom about the nature of groups, and although the basic assumptions of group dynamics were discussed from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, the field of group dynamics is a twentieth-century, North American development. Interested scientists came from many different disciplines and branches of the social sciences. The field of group dynamics, therefore, is the common property of all the social sciences.

While its roots go back to the late 1800s, group dynamics gained prominence as a field of study in the early 1940s. After a worldwide depression, the rise of dictatorships in Europe, and World War II, most Americans were worried about the fate of their country and the future of democracy. A general agreement existed that the country needed a better understanding of how democratic organizations could be made to function more effectively. Scientists had helped win the war, many people said, and now research should improve democracy. The field of group dynamics was thought to have significant potential for doing so. The health of a democratic society was seen as depending on the effectiveness of its component groups. Strengthening the family, the community, and the multitude of groups within our society was viewed as the primary means of ensuring the vitality of our democracy. For Americans, the scientific study of how groups functioned was needed to maintain a democratic form of government and solve current social problems.

The drive to strengthen democracy by using the scientific method to strengthen groups resulted in two interrelated movements within psychology. The first movement was the scientific study of group dynamics. Searching for ways to strengthen democracy, a new group of specialists called *social psychologists* developed experimental methods of studying group dynamics and began to conduct studies of group discussion, group productivity, attitude change, and leadership. The second movement was the application of group dynamics theory and research to develop methods for training leaders and group members in the social skills needed to promote effective functioning of democratic groups.

In the late nineteenth century, researchers on group dynamics focused on the question, What change in an individual's normal solitary performance occurs when other people are present? Norman Triplett, an Indiana University psychologist, studied the records of the Racing Board of the League of American Wheelmen. Triplett observed that cyclists' times were faster when they were racing against each other than when the cyclists simply raced against the clock. He hypothesized that the presence of other people (i.e., competitors) acted as a stimulant to the performer. If the hypothesis was valid, Triplett reasoned, it would hold for activities other than bicycle racing. Creating an analogy to bicycle racing, Triplett (1898) asked children to wind fishing reels and compared their performance when alone with their performance when another child was present. The children performed faster when the audience was present. This experiment was the first attempt to investigate the impact of social interdependence (i.e., competitive versus individualistic efforts) on achievement on a motor performance task.

Triplett's work later resulted in research on social facilitation-impairment (Zajonc, 1965), social interdependence (Johnson, 1989), and social loafing (Harkins & Szymanski, 1987). Social facilitation researchers, for example, were interested in the question, Does the impact of an audience differ on simple versus complex tasks? If you were running a mile, would an audience make you run faster or slower? If you were asked to assemble a complex new machine you had never seen before, would an audience increase or decrease the speed with which you assembled the machine? Allport (1924), Moede (1920), and others found that on simple tasks, an audience increased an individual's speed of performance, while on complex tasks an audience decreased an individual's speed of performance.

Another line of research, which became prominent in the late 1920s and 1930s, focused on the question, Are individuals or groups more productive on problem-solving and decision-making tasks? (Gordon, 1924; Shaw, 1932; Watson, 1928). Overall, the results indicated that groups are more productive than are individuals. The descendants of this tradition are the research on social interdependence (Deutsch, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989), jury decision making (e.g., Kerr et al., 1976), minority influence in groups (e.g., Moscovici, 1985a), conformity (e.g., Asch, 1951), and group polarization (e.g., D. Myers, 1978).

Kurt Lewin

By the end of the 1930s the field of group dynamics had advanced rapidly, due largely to the efforts of Kurt Lewin and three sociologists. Muzafer Sherif (1936) studied the impact of group norms on perception of an ambiguous stimulus. In an ingenious experiment he demonstrated that the judgments made by individuals were influenced by the judgments of their fellow group members. Sherif (1906–1988) was born in Turkey and first came to the United States in 1929 to do graduate work at Harvard. He studied briefly in Germany, where he became opposed to Nazism. When he returned to the United States in 1934, he completed a doctorate at Columbia University under Gardner Murphy. Returning to Turkey, he increasingly got into trouble for his criticisms of Nazism in the German and Turkish governments. He was imprisoned in 1944, but his American colleagues secured his release and facilitated his immigration to the United States in 1945. He taught at Princeton University until 1949, when he moved to the University of Oklahoma, where he became director of the Institute for Group Relations.

Theodore Newcomb (1903–1984) was born in Ohio and, after graduating from Oberlin College, received his doctorate at Columbia University, where he worked with Goodwin Watson and Gardner Murphy. He spent most of his career at the University of Michigan, making many contributions to the field of group dynamics. He is considered one of the originators in the field because of his famous Bennington field study. As previously discussed, during the years 1935–1939, Theodore Newcomb (1943)

investigated the impact of social norms on political issues on the students at Bennington College. His research laid the foundation for the study of reference groups.

In 1937, W. F. Whyte moved into one of the slums of Boston and began a three-and-a-half-year study of social clubs, political organizations, and racketeering. Whyte (1943) reported in vivid detail the structure, culture, and functioning of the Norton Street gang and the Italian Community Club. His study dramatized the great significance of groups in the lives of individuals and in the functioning of larger social systems. One of his most interesting findings was that expectations for performance in a given activity within the group (i.e., bowling) were stabilized in line with relative status of group members, in spite of the fact that some low-status members exhibited high skill in the task when they played against individuals outside their own group. Whyte also demonstrated the power of research conducted by a participant-observer (i.e., someone involved in the situation who makes systematic observations of the behavior of the other participants).

While the early contributions of Sherif, Newcomb, and Whyte were important influences on the formation of the field of group dynamics, in the 1930s and 1940s the field was defined and popularized by Lewin's pioneering work, which demonstrated that the behavior of individuals should be understood in terms of the nature of the groups to which they belong (Lewin, 1943, 1948). The most influential study of group dynamics in the late 1930s was that of Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939), which focused on the influences of different leadership patterns on groups and group members. Groups of ten- and eleven-year-old children met regularly for several weeks under the leadership of an adult, who behaved in one of three ways, democratically, autocratically, or in a laissez-faire manner. The effects of these leadership patterns on the behavior of group members were large and dramatic. Severe forms of scapegoating, for example, occurred in the autocratic groups, and at the end of the experiment the children in some of those groups destroyed the things they had constructed. This study made it clear that important social issues could be produced in the laboratory and studied experimentally.

Following this study, Lewin and his associates conducted a series of research studies aimed at developing a theory of group dynamics. Their studies focused on the effects of fear and frustration on organized versus unorganized groups (French, 1941), the impact of training on the behavior of leaders of youth groups (Bavelas, 1942), group decision-making procedures as a means of improving industrial production (Marrow, 1957), and group decision-making procedures as a means of changing eating habits related to wartime food shortages (Lewin, 1943; Radke & Klisurich, 1947). Group dynamics research was gaining popularity at this time and was being applied to an ever-increasing list of problems.

In the 1950s, Bales and his colleagues conducted research on the patterning of group members' responses and the nature of roles within a group in small discussion groups (Bales, 1950, 1953; Bales & Slater, 1955). Bavelas (1948) and Leavitt (1951) examined information exchange by imposing network structures on decision-making groups and observing their effects on subsequent productivity. Schachter (1951) researched group reactions to the opinions of deviates. Deutsch (1949a, 1949b, 1962) investigated cooperation and competition and the nature of trust.

In the 1950s the seeds were planted that ended the group dynamics movement. Festinger's theories of informal social communication (1950) and social comparison (1954) focused social psychology on the individual (not the group) as the primary unit analysis. Social psychology began to examine how attitudes, values, personality, and thoughts internal to an individual guided and influenced social behavior. This individualistic trend was accelerated by the emergence of several other theoretical perspectives during the late 1950s, such as attribution theory (Heider, 1958), cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), and persuasion (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953).

In the 1960s and 1970s, most social psychologists saw the individual as a simpler unit than the group on which to base the study of social interaction. Statistical and methodological difficulties in group research pushed researchers toward the study of individual variables. Psychologists were disposed to deconstruct social variables into smaller segments (the individual) rather than integrating them into larger social structures. They preferred to use single-factor explanations for behavior rather than multifactor explanations. Studies that involved the systematic observation of groups in naturalistic settings were seen as too difficult and expensive to conduct, analyze, and interpret.

In the 1980s and 1990s, however, the investigation of group dynamics experienced a revival. Many of the pragmatic, methodological, and statistical difficulties that thwarted group research in the 1950s and 1960s were either ameliorated or largely overcome. A number of group issues, such as cooperation, conflict resolution, distributive justice, intergroup relations, and cross-cultural interaction, became major research foci of social psychology (Deutsch, 1985; Tjosvold, 1991a; Tjosvold & Johnson, 1982). In industrial psychology, the determinants of work-group productivity and modes of effective leadership was the focus of considerable research (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Tjosvold, 1991b). Clinical psychologists emphasized the client–therapist relationship and the treatment of families as dysfunctional systems (e.g., Johnson & Matross, 1977; Wolman & Stricker, 1983). In sociology, research focused on the possession and use of power, dominance hierarchies, and group structure (e.g., Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980). In Europe, interest focused on group issues such as minority influence (Moscovici, 1985a) and intergroup relations (Tajfel, 1981).

The growth of the field of group dynamics may be seen in the number of studies published in the field. From 1890 to 1940 there had been a gradual growth in the number of published studies on group behavior from one per year to approximately thirty per year. By the late 1940s, fifty-five studies were being published annually, and by the end of the 1950s the rate had skyrocketed to about 150. During the 1960s and 1970s the rate of research studies on group dynamics persisted at about 125 per year. Group dynamics became one of the dominant fields in the social sciences. In the twenty-first century, interest in group dynamics is on the rise.

Kurt Lewin and the Field of Group Dynamics

As previously stated, Kurt Lewin was at the heart of the group dynamic movements and consequently was one of the most important psychologists of the twentieth century. Lewin was born on September 9, 1890, in the tiny village of Mogilno in the Prussian province of Posen, now part of Poland. In 1914 he completed his doctoral studies in philosophy and psychology at the University of Berlin. He then joined the Kaiser's army as a private in the infantry and fought for four years in World War I, during which time he was promoted to lieutenant and given an Iron Cross for bravery. At the end of the war, he returned to the University of Berlin to teach and to become part of the Psychological Institute, where Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka, and Wolfgang Kohler were formulating Gestalt theory. Lewin became one of the Gestaltists, but his interests were in the area of motivation and his work tended to be directed toward practical application. In 1933, as Hitler was rising to power, Lewin migrated to the United States. He

subsequently worked at Cornell University, the University of Iowa, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he founded and headed the famous Research Center for Group Dynamics (which later moved to the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan). On February 11, 1947, Lewin died suddenly of a heart attack.

In his advocacy of the study of group dynamics Lewin was noted for three things: his development of theory, his early championing of the use of experimental methodology, and his insistence that theory and research be relevant to social practice.

Kurt Lewin was above all a theorist. Lewin's contributions to theory in group dynamics included (1) an emphasis on building conceptual systems that explained the dynamics observed in groups and (2) creating a field theory analysis of the field (Lewin, 1943, 1948). Borrowing concepts and language from force-field physics, Lewin theorized that individuals locomote through different regions of their life-space, being either impelled by forces or drawn by valences that exist along power vectors. Some of the strongest forces and valences an individual experiences stem from groups. From this theoretical orientation, he and his associates and students formulated a wide variety of theories and research programs that defined the field of group dynamics.

Lewin was an innovative researcher who had a genius for thinking of ways to study his ideas experimentally. He was convinced that the use of experimental methods in researching the dynamics of groups would revolutionize the field, and he was right.

Lewin saw the interests of the theorist and those of the practitioner as being inextricably interrelated. He believed that social science theory should do more than advance knowledge; it should also provide guidelines for action. To this end, Lewin coined the term **action research,** to indicate using the scientific method to answer research questions that have significant social value. He urged social scientists to develop theories that can be applied to important social problems. Lewin saw group dynamics theory as one way to bridge the gaps between theoretical science, public policies, and democratic practices. He had a profound faith in democracy, which to him was much more than just a political system. It was also a way of life, based on mutual participation and continual interaction in decision making for purposeful change. He wanted to conduct and inspire research that made a difference in the real world of human affairs.

Although Lewin did not create the field of group dynamics, he was the major source of much of the theorizing, the development of innovative experimental research methods, and the practical application in the field. Both the content of this book and the entire field of group dynamics are heavily influenced by Lewin and his work.

THE NATURE OF THIS BOOK AND HOW TO USE IT

This is not a book that you can read with detachment. It is written to involve you with its content. By reading this book, you will learn the theoretical and empirical knowledge now available on group dynamics, and you will learn how to apply this knowledge in practical ways within the groups to which you belong. In the past, group dynamics practitioners did not often pay attention to the research literature, and group dynamics researchers often neglected to specify how their findings could be applied. Thus, the knowledge about effective groups and the learning of group skills tended to be separated. In this book we directly apply existing theory and research to the learning of effective group skills. The book defines the skills needed for effective group functioning; it also

provides opportunities for readers to practice these skills for themselves and to receive feedback on their performance. As you participate in the exercises, use diagnostic procedures to assess your current skill levels, and discuss the relevant theory and research provided, you bridge the gap between theory and practice.

In selecting exercises to include in this book, we tried to include exercises that were original, short, relevant to the theory and research being discussed, clear and simple, and easy to do. We intended each exercise to be like a supporting actor: It should do its work effectively, unobtrusively, and without upstaging the theory and research being presented. Each exercise is aimed at promoting the development of group skills.

The purpose of this book is to bring together the theory on group dynamics, the research testing that theory, and structured exercises aimed at building practical group skills and illuminating the meaning of the theory and research presented. The central aim of each chapter is to review the most important theory and research on a given topic, analyze basic issues in group dynamics, and provide structured skill-building exercises and other instructional aids. Most chapters begin with a discussion task involving the concepts presented in the chapter. A short diagnostic instrument is

Keeping a Personal Journal

A *journal* is a personal collection of writing and thoughts that have value for the writer. Keeping a journal is an important part of using this book. You may wish to record what you are learning about group dynamics and about how you behave in group situations. A journal has to be kept up on a regular basis. Entries should be valuable to the author, have some possibilities for sharing with others, and reflect significant thinking. Such a journal will be of great interest to you after you have finished this book. The purposes of the journal are:

1. To record what you are learning about group dynamics that has personal meaning. You may also wish to include specific information you have learned about the social psychology of groups, effective behavior in groups, and the extent to which you have developed the group skills you want.
2. To record how you behave in group situations.
3. To collect thoughts related to the book's content (the best thinking often occurs when you are driving to or from school, about to go to sleep at night, and so forth).
4. To collect newspaper and magazine articles and references relevant to the topics covered in each chapter.
5. To keep summaries of conversations and anecdotal material that are unique, interesting, or illustrate things related to group dynamics.

The journal is an important part of this book. It is not an easy part. The entries should be important to you in your effort to make this course useful to you and your fellow participants. You may be surprised how writing sharpens and organizes your thoughts.

(Note: If you publish your journal, as did John Holt, Hugh Prather, and others, all we ask is a modest 10% of the royalties.)

Learning Contract

Before beginning the next chapter, we would like to propose a learning contract. The contract is as follows:

I understand that I will be taking an experiential approach to learning about group dynamics and to developing the skills needed to function effectively in groups. I willingly commit myself to the statements hereunder.

1. I will use the structured experiences in this book to learn from. This means I am willing to engage in specified behaviors, seek out feedback about the impact of my behavior on others, and analyze my interpersonal interactions with other class members in order to make the most of my learning.
2. I will make the most of my learning by (a) setting personal learning goals that I will work actively to accomplish, (b) being willing to experiment with new behavior and to practice new skills, (c) being open about my feelings and reactions to what is taking place, (d) seeking out and being receptive to feedback, and (e) building conclusions about the experiences highlighted in the exercises.
3. I will help others make the most of their learning by (a) providing feedback in constructive ways, (b) helping to build the conditions (such as openness, trust, acceptance, and support) under which others can experiment and take risks with their behavior, and (c) contributing to the formulation of conclusions about the experiences highlighted in the exercises.
4. I will use professional judgment in keeping what happens among group members in the exercises appropriately confidential.

Signed: _____

Your Skill Level

Before continuing on to Chapter 2, it is a good idea for you to assess your current group skill level. Doing so provides you with a baseline of what your current skills are, indicates areas you may need to work on, and serves as a point of comparison for later in the book when you learn more about group dynamics. Answer the following questions, describing yourself as accurately as you can:

1. How do you see yourself as a group member? What is your pattern of behavior in functioning within groups?
2. What are your strengths in functioning in groups?
3. What situations within groups do you have trouble with and why? How do you feel when faced with them? How do you handle them? How would you like to handle them?
4. What group skills do you wish to improve? What changes would you like to make in your present group behavior? What new strengths in group behavior would you care to develop? What new group skills would you like to acquire?

presented at the beginning of each chapter to help you become more aware of your current behavior in the area under discussion. In addition, most chapters contain a controversy exercise in which you and your classmates argue different sides of one of the central issues of the chapter. At the end of many of the chapters there is a procedure for examining the changes in your knowledge and skills.

In using this book you should diagnose your present knowledge and skills in the areas that are covered, actively participate in the exercises, reflect on your experiences, read the chapters carefully, and integrate the information and experiences into action theories related to group dynamics. You then should plan how to continue your skill- and knowledge-building activities after you have finished the book.

SUMMARY

Group dynamics is the scientific study of behavior in groups. Group dynamics is central to human existence, as humans are small-group beings. Groups are ubiquitous in our lives, and it is inevitable that you now belong to many, many groups. Because you spend so much time in various groups, the effectiveness of your groups relates directly to the quality of your life. Therefore, you need a working knowledge of group dynamics and the small-group skills required to put that knowledge to use in school, at work, during leisure activities, at home, in your neighborhood, and in every other arena of your life. To begin with, you must know what is and is not a group. That is harder than it seems, as social scientists have yet to agree on a single definition. Generally, however, a small group is two or more individuals in face-to-face interaction, each aware of their positive interdependence as they strive to achieve mutual goals, each aware of his or her membership in the group, and each aware of the others who belong to the group.

All groups have a basic structure that includes roles and norms. Group productivity depends on five basic elements (positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, appropriate use of social skills, group processing). Not all groups are effective. To be effective, groups members have to (1) ensure each other's commitment to clear mutual goals that highlight members' interdependence, (2) ensure accurate and complete communication among members, (3) provide leadership and appropriate influence, (4) flexibly use decision-making procedures that ensure all alternative courses of action receive a fair and complete hearing and that each person's reasoning and conclusions are challenged and critically analyzed, and (5) resolve their conflicts constructively. Groups develop over time and pass through stages, although there is little agreement as to what those stages are.

The field of group dynamics is about 110 years old in North America. One of the most important figures in the field of group dynamics is Kurt Lewin. His work more than anyone else's shows the interrelationships between knowledge of group dynamics and actual small-group skills. The purpose of this book is to bring together the theory on group dynamics, the research testing them, and structured exercises aimed at helping readers master practical group skills. The experiential learning procedures used in creating this integration of theory, research, and practical skills are discussed in the next chapter.

Johnson & Johnson [2006]

10 Valuing Diversity

Basic Concepts to Be Covered in This Chapter

In this chapter a number of concepts are defined and discussed. The major ones are in the following list. Divide into pairs. Each pair is to (1) define each concept, noting the page on which it is defined and discussed, and (2) ensure that both members of the pair understand the meaning of each concept. Then join with another pair to make a group of four. Compare the answers of the two pairs. If there is disagreement, look up the concept in the chapter and clarify it until all members agree on and understand the definition.

Concepts

1. Ability and skill diversity
2. Blaming the victim
3. Causal attribution
4. Culture clash
5. Demographic diversity
6. Discrimination
7. Ethnocentrism
8. False consensus bias
9. Illusionary correlation
10. Personal diversity
11. Personal identity
12. Prejudice
13. Self-serving attributions
14. Sophistication
15. Stereotype
16. Superordinate identity

EXERCISE 10.1

Diversity: Beneficial or Harmful?

Task: Your tasks are to (1) write a group report on the question, "Is diversity beneficial or harmful?" and (2) individually pass a test on the information from both sides of the issue. Your report should provide details of the advantages and disadvantages of diversity. Review the rules for constructive controversy on page 33 in Chapter 1.

A controversy about the value of diversity is raging. Imagine that you are a committee of the top four officials who are trying to decide whether diversity should be encouraged or discouraged. To ensure that both sides get a complete and fair hearing, you have divided the committee into two groups to present the best case possible for each side of the issue. Your thesis will be either of the following two choices:

____ Diversity is a resource that has many beneficial influences.
____ Diversity is a problem that has many harmful influences.

Cooperative: Write one report for the group of four. All members have to agree. Everyone has to be able to explain the choice made and the reasons why the choice is a good one. To help you write the best report possible, your group of four has been divided into two pairs. One pair has been assigned the position that diversity is beneficial, and the other pair has been assigned the position that diversity is harmful.

PROCEDURE

1. **Research and Prepare Your Positions:** Your group of four has been divided into two pairs. Each pair is to (a) research its assigned position, (b) organize it into a persuasive argument (thesis, rationale, conclusion), and (c) plan how to present the best case for its position to the other pair.

2. **Present and Advocate Your Position:** Make sure your assigned position receives a fair and complete hearing. Forcefully and persuasively present the best case for your position to the opposing pair. Be as convincing as possible. Take notes and clarify anything you do not understand when the opposing pair presents.
3. **Open Discussion (Advocate, Refute, Rebut):** Argue forcefully and persuasively for your position. Critically evaluate and challenge the opposing pair's information and reasoning. Defend your position from attack.
4. **Reverse Perspectives:** Reverse perspectives and present the best case for the opposing position. The opposing pair will present your position. Strive to see the issue from both perspectives simultaneously.
5. **Synthesis:** Drop all advocacy. Synthesize and integrate the best information and reasoning from both sides into a joint position on which all group members can agree. Then (a) finalize the group report, (b) plan how to present your conclusions to the class, (c) ensure that all group members are prepared to take the test, and (d) analyze how well you worked together as a group and how you could be even more effective next time.

DIVERSITY IS BENEFICIAL

You represent the prodiversity perspective. Your position is: *Diversity is a resource that has many beneficial influences.* Arguments that support your position follow. Summarize the evidence given. Research your position and find as much additional information to support it as possible. Arrange your information into a compelling, convincing, and persuasive argument showing that your position is valid and correct. Plan how best to present your assigned position to ensure that it receives a fair and complete hearing. Make at least one visual aid to help you present a persuasive case for your position.

1. **Diversity decreases stereotyping and prejudice.** It is only through direct contact and interaction with diverse individuals that stereotypes can be disconfirmed, personal relationships can be built, and prejudice can be reduced.
2. **Diversity increases the positiveness of relationships.** There is evidence that we want people we work with to achieve mutual goals. Positive relationships can lead to acceptance, respect, appreciation, and a commitment to equality.
3. **Diversity renews the vitality of society** by providing a source of energy and creativity. Music, dance, art, literature, and other aspects of culture are enriched and advanced by the mixture of different cultural traditions and ways of perceiving the world.
4. **Diversity increases achievement and productivity.** Diverse groups have a wider range of resources available for completing the task and therefore tend to have higher achievement and to be more productive than homogeneous groups.
5. **Diversity increases creative problem solving.** Diverse groups tend to be more creative in their problem solving than are homogeneous groups. The conflicts and disagreements that arise from the different perspectives and conclusions generate more creativity than is available in homogeneous groups.
6. **Diversity fosters growth in cognitive and moral reasoning.** Cognitive and moral growth depend on applying at least two different perspectives to the same issue. Without such diversity, cognitive and moral growth cannot take place.
7. **Diversity fosters perspective taking** and a broader, more sophisticated view of the world and what happens in it. Without exposure to other perspectives, perspective-taking ability cannot develop. The more able a person is to take a wide variety of perspectives, the more sophisticated the person is. Being sophisticated means that one can see the world, events, and issues from a variety of perspectives. It is through diversity that sophistication is created.
8. **Diversity builds a commitment to American democracy.** It is not possible to value a fully American democracy in a homogeneous environment. The values advocated in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence can best be understood through the protection of minority rights and the ability of minorities to influence the decisions of the majority.

DIVERSITY IS HARMFUL

You represent the antidiversity perspective. Your position is: *Diversity is a problem that has many harmful influences.* Arguments that support your position follow. Summarize the evidence given. Research your position and find as much additional information to support it as possible. Arrange your information into a compelling, convincing, and persuasive argument showing that your position is valid and correct. Plan how best to present your assigned position to ensure that it receives a fair and complete hearing. Make at least one visual aid to help you present a persuasive case for your position.

1. **Diversity increases stereotyping and prejudice.** Before actual contact takes place, only vague impressions of members of other groups may exist. With actual contact with diverse individuals, stereotypes can be confirmed and prejudice can be strengthened.
2. **Diversity creates interaction strain** (feeling discomfort and uncertainty as to how to behave). Interaction strain inhibits interaction, creates ambivalence, and fosters atypical behavior, such as overfriendliness, followed by withdrawal and avoidance.
3. **Diversity increases the negativity of relationships.** There is evidence that we like people we see as similar to ourselves and dislike people who seem different. Dislike can lead to rejection, scapegoating, bullying, hostility, and even prejudice.
4. **Diversity lowers productivity.** Diversity creates difficulties in communication, coordination, and decision making. These difficulties result in spending more time trying to communicate and less time completing the task. Productivity suffers.
5. **Diversity makes life more complex and difficult.** It is easy to relate to similar people. You never have to stop and think about what to say or do. The more diverse the group, the more you have to monitor your statements and behavior to ensure that you do not inadvertently insult or hurt someone's feelings.
6. **Diversity requires more effort to relate to others.** Even talking to a person from another culture takes more concentration and effort. Accents can be distracting. Phrases can be unusual. Communicating effectively with diverse individuals takes more effort than communicating with individuals like yourself.
7. **Diversity can be threatening,** which creates defensiveness, egocentrism, and closed-minded rejection of new information. The more defensive a person is, the more closed-minded and less receptive to new information the person becomes.
8. **Diversity creates internal dissonance and anxiety** by challenging the standard ways of thinking and doing things. Strange new ways of perceiving the world and completing tasks can create dissonance about one's traditional behavior, and anxiety results. People are calmer and happier when they are with homogeneous peers.

INTRODUCTION

In the story *Beauty and the Beast,* Beauty, to save her father's life, agrees to live in an enchanted castle with the Beast. Although initially fearful of the Beast and horrified by his appearance, she later is able to see beyond his monstrous appearance and into his heart. Her perception of his appearance changes; she no longer is repelled by the way he looks but instead is drawn to his kind and generous nature. At the end of the story, finding him dying of a broken heart, she reveals her love for him, which transforms the Beast into a handsome prince. Beauty and the Beast not only live happily ever after, but all those who stumble into their domain in-despair change, finding on their departure that their hearts are filled with goodness and beauty.

One reason *Beauty and the Beast* retains its popularity is because it strikes a familiar chord in many people. Many times we are repelled by those we do not know. But after we come to know them and they have become our friends, we cannot understand how they once seemed so foreign to us. The moral of *Beauty and the Beast* is applicable especially in small groups. Small groups almost always contain a diverse selection of individuals, and in order for a group to be successful and effective, diversity must be faced and eventually valued.

The diversity that exists among individuals creates an opportunity for both positive and negative outcomes when these individuals come together in groups to achieve a goal or complete a task (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). More specifically, *diversity among group members can result in beneficial consequences,* such as increased achievement and productivity, creative problem solving, growth in cognitive and moral reasoning, increased perspective-taking ability, improved relationships, and general sophistication in interacting and working with peers from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. On the other hand, *diversity among group members can result in harmful consequences,* such as lower achievement and productivity, closed-minded rejection of new information, increased egocentrism, and negative relationships characterized by hostility, rejection, divisiveness, scapegoating, bullying, stereotyping, prejudice, and racism. Both the positive and negative consequences of diversity on group life are discussed in this chapter.

Whether diversity leads to positive or negative outcomes in a group largely depends on group members abilities and their willingness to understand and appreciate the diversity that exists in the group. Specifically, the outcomes of diversity depend on your abilities to (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 1995, 1999b)

1. Recognize that diversity exists and is a valuable resource.
2. Build a coherent personal identity that includes (a) your own cultural/ethnic heritage and (b) a view of yourself as an individual who respects and values differences among individuals.
3. Understand the internal cognitive barriers (such as stereotyping and prejudice) to building relationships with diverse peers, and work to reduce the barriers.
4. Understand the dynamics of intergroup conflict (see Chapter 9).
5. Understand the social judgment process, and know how to create the process of acceptance while avoiding the process of rejection (see Chapter 3).

6. Create a cooperative context in which positive relationships among diverse individuals can be built (see Chapter 3). This requires building cooperation as opposed to a competitive or individualistic effort. It is within a cooperative context that diverse individuals develop personal (as opposed to impersonal) relationships.
7. Manage conflicts in constructive ways. This includes
   a. Intellectual conflicts that are part of decision-making and learning situations (controversy) (see Chapter 8).
   b. Conflicts of interests that are resolved by problem-solving negotiations and mediation (see Chapter 9).
8. Learn and internalize pluralistic, democratic values.

SOURCES OF DIVERSITY

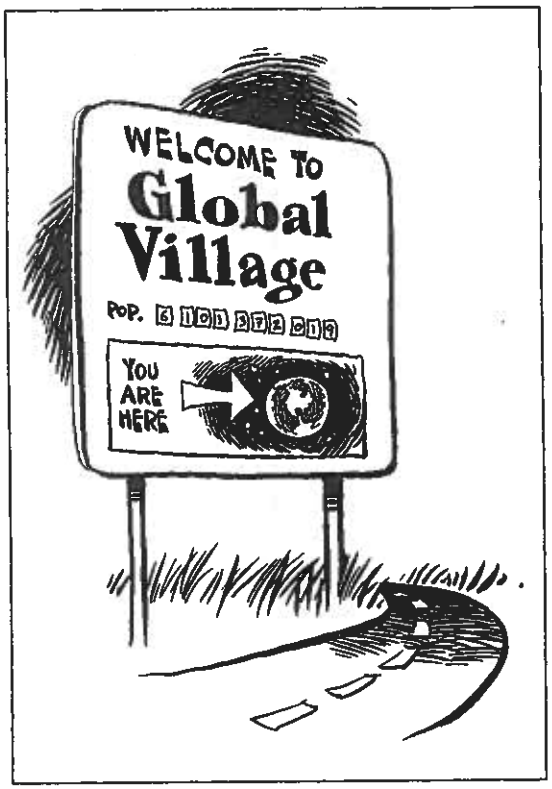
Three major sources of diversity can be identified: demographic characteristics, personality characteristics, and abilities and skills. On their own and in conjunction, these sources of diversity affect how people interact with one another. **Demographic diversity** includes culture, ethnicity, language, handicapping conditions, age, gender, social class, religion, and regional differences. North America, for example, is becoming more multicultural and multilingual. Historically, the United States always has been pluralistic, with citizens coming here from all over the world. In the 1980s alone, over 7.8 million people from over 150 different countries and speaking dozens of different languages immigrated to the United States (Table 10.1). Our common culture has been formed by the interaction of various cultures and has been influenced over time by a wide variety of willing (and sometimes unwilling) European, African, and Asian immigrants as well as Native Americans. What we call American music, art, literature, language, food, and customs all show the effects of the integration of diverse cultures into one nation by representing all of these backgrounds.

In addition to demographic diversity, individuals have different **personal characteristics,** such as age, gender, communication style, economic background, and so on. Some people may be introverts while others are extroverts; some people approach problems randomly while others take a sequential approach. People from the same age group

Table 10.1 **Waves of Immigration**

Origin	1820–1860	1901–1921	1970–1986
Northern, Western Europe	95%	41%	6%
Southern, Eastern Europe		44	9
Latin America			37
Asia		4	41
North America	3	6	3
Other	2	1	4

Sources: Population Reference Bureau, Bureau of the Census, Immigration and Naturalization Service.



may have similar attitudes toward economic conditions and war but find that those attitudes differ greatly from the attitudes of people in a different age group. Males and females often have different opinions about interpersonal relationships. A person's education level may inform his or her attitudes toward innovation. In terms of group dynamics, group members usually have different values, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles, styles of interaction, and commitments—all of which determine the course of the group's life.

Finally, individuals differ in the **abilities and skills**—both social and technical—they bring to the group. Experts from a variety of fields, for example, may be brought together to solve a problem or conduct a project. Representatives from design, manufacturing, distribution, and sales departments may form a team to bring a new product to market. Accountants and creative artists may work together to revitalize a neighborhood. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find a productive group whose members do not have a wide variety of abilities and skills.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGING DIVERSITY

The more voices we allow to speak about one thing, the more eyes, different eyes we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our concept of this thing, our objectivity, be.

Nietzsche

Utilizing diversity in ways that produce many positive outcomes and few negative outcomes is one of the major challenges facing modern societies. Finding ways to deal with diversity is becoming increasingly important, for several reasons. *First, we increasingly live in one world.* The problems that face each person, each community, and each country cannot be solved without global cooperation and joint action. Changes in the world economy, transportation, and communication are resulting in increased interdependence among individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and societies. The more interdependent the world becomes, the more diverse the membership of any one group is likely to be. In the global village model used to speak of this world community, highly diverse individuals are interdependent and must find ways to interact and work together.

Second, diversity in most settings is inevitable; therefore, individuals need the skills to interact effectively with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. For 200,000 years humans lived in small hunting-and-gathering groups, interacting only infrequently with other nearby small groups. It is only with the recent development of worldwide interdependence and communication and transportation systems that diverse types of individuals have begun to interact with, work with, and live next to one another. In North America, Europe, and throughout the world, individuals increasingly interact with people who come from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, speak different languages, and have grown up in markedly different conditions. In addition, people of different genders, age groups, and economic groups have more opportunities to interact with one another in modern society than they did in the past. These days, diversity among acquaintances, classmates, coworkers, neighbors, and friends is increasingly inevitable.

Third, economically there has been a globalization of business, as reflected in the increase in multinational companies, coproduction agreements, and offshore operations. More and more companies must translate their local and national perspectives into a worldview. Companies staffed by individuals skilled in building relationships with diverse types of persons have an advantage in the global market. A telephone survey of 408 executives, consultants, and faculty involved in human resource issues in business asked respondents to think ahead about the strategic issues that business will face. In their responses, managing a more diverse workforce was the one issue repeatedly mentioned (Sirota, Alpher, & Pfau, 1989).

With increasing interdependence among people throughout the world, diversity in small groups cannot and should not be avoided or bypassed. Any group may consist of members who are diverse on a large number of personal characteristics and the abilities and skills they contribute to the group's efforts. *Tomorrow's effective groups (including large groups such as organizations and nations) will be those that have learned to be productive with a diverse membership.* The rest of this chapter, therefore, focuses on the ways groups can take full advantage of the positive consequences of diversity and can minimize the potentially negative consequences. The remainder of this chapter is divided into three sections. First, evidence is reviewed that indicates diversity in group composition increases productivity on a variety of tasks. Second, the difficulties with diversity that have to be faced, such as stereotypes, prejudice, racism, blaming the victim, and culture clash, are discussed. Finally, the practical procedures that groups can use to ensure that diversity is a resource and not a hindrance are presented.

THE VALUE OF DIVERSITY

Research documenting the value of diversity has focused primarily on a group's performance on a variety of tasks. Some research examines the impact of diversity on group cohesion and group conflict, which are determinants of overall group absenteeism, turnover, and satisfaction.

Group Composition and Performance on Tasks

How does heterogeneity of group membership affect group performance? Researchers have studied the degree of homogeneity–heterogeneity among members' demographic attributes, personal attributes, and abilities and skills. Three types of tasks have been studied: (1) performance on clearly defined production tasks, (2) performance on cognitive or intellective tasks, and (3) creative idea generation and decision making related to ambiguous judgmental tasks (Jackson, 1992; Johnson & Johnson, 1989; McGrath, 1984). The combination of sources of diversity and types of task is presented in Table 10.2 (Jackson, 1992).

Production tasks have objective standards for performance evaluation and require the proficient use of perceptual and motor skills (McGrath, 1984). Haythorn (1968) conducted a comprehensive review of research on group composition and performance tasks, covering studies conducted primarily between 1940 and 1968. Shaw (1981), McGrath (1984), and Driskell, Hogan, and Salas (1987) have conducted subsequent reviews. These reviews indicate that relatively few studies, with mixed results, have assessed the impact of personal attribute composition on performance tasks. Two studies found performance to be higher in groups whose members were homogeneous in personal attributes (Clement & Schiereck, 1973; Fenelon & Megaree, 1971). Terborg, Castore, and DeNinno (1976), however, found attitude heterogeneity–homogeneity to be unrelated to performance in a longitudinal study of student groups working on land-surveying tasks.

To summarize this research, we can say that groups composed of members with heterogeneous technical abilities may do better on production tasks than groups composed of members with homogeneous technical abilities (Jackson, 1992). Pelz (1956) found that more productive scientists and engineers tended to create informal communication networks with dissimilar peers. The productivity among scientists and engineers correlated positively with their frequency of contact with colleagues whose training and expertise were dissimilar to their own. Such networks resemble loosely structured heterogeneous groups. Voiers (1956) found that heterogeneous abilities facilitated the performance of B-29 bomber crews when the crews could take advantage of the ability heterogeneity by assigning members to tasks for which they were best suited. In addition, athletic teams with more diverse skills, such as good offensive and defensive units, have been found to outperform teams with less diverse skills.

Intellective tasks are problem-solving tasks with correct answers (McGrath, 1984). Wood (1987) reviewed the research on the impact of gender differences on group performance. He found twelve studies in which objective performance results (accuracy and speed) could be compared for same- versus mixed-sex groups. He found weak support for the conclusion that mixed-sex groups tend to outperform same-sex groups, whether male or female. Similar findings have been reported in studies of more complex learning tasks (R. Johnson, Johnson, Scott, & Ramolae, 1985; Peterson, Johnson, & Johnson, 1991). Laughlin and colleagues (see Laughlin, 1980), for example, have demonstrated that in problem-solving groups, "truth supported wins." Furthermore, when heterogeneity increases the probability that the group contains some members who are capable of determining the correct answer to the problems being solved, mixed-attribute groups should outperform homogeneous groups. Other studies have demonstrated that groups made up of individuals with different ability levels (high, medium, low) outperform individuals on intellective tasks (Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

Table 10.2 **Group Composition and Types of Tasks**

Types of Diversity Investigated	Types of Tasks
Demographic attributes	Performance on clearly defined production tasks
Personal attributes (personality, attitudes, values)	Performance on cognitive or intellective tasks
Abilities and skills (technical, social)	Creative idea generation and decision making on ambiguous judgmental tasks

Decision-making tasks involve reaching a consensus about the best solution to a problem when the "correct" answer is not known (McGrath, 1984). Research reviews indicate that heterogeneous groups are more likely than homogeneous groups to be creative and to reach high-quality decisions (Fiedler, Meuwese, & Conk, 1961; Filley, House, & Kerr, 1976; Frick, 1973; Hoffman, 1979; Johnson, 1977; Johnson & Johnson, 1989; McGrath, 1984; Shaw, 1981; Torrance, 1961; Webb, 1977). The conclusion holds for a variety of personal attributes, including personality (Hoffman & Maier, 1961), leadership abilities (Ghiselli & Lodahl, 1958), types of training (Pelz, 1956), and attitudes (Hoffman, Harburg, & Maier, 1962b; Triandis, Hall, & Ewen, 1965; Willems & Clark, 1971).

In one decision-making task study, Ziller, Behringer, and Goodchilds (1962) created heterogeneity in some groups by changing the group members (open groups); other groups maintained the same members (closed groups). The researchers asked the groups to write cartoon captions. Captions written by the heterogeneous (open) groups were judged to have greater fluency and originality. Pelz and Andrews (1966) also found that groups with fluid membership are likely to be more creative, even when the groups are interdisciplinary. They concluded that when scientists from interdisciplinary teams worked closely together on a daily basis, within three years they became homogeneous in their perspectives and approach to solving problems.

Although diverse perspectives are potentially advantageous, heterogeneous groups may not always function at an optimal level. Hill (1982) reviewed several studies whose results indicated that on creative and decision-making tasks, the performance of interacting groups was less than their potential, as estimated by statistical pooling. Hall and Williams (1966), however, found exactly the opposite. Furthermore, in a field study of 119 top management teams in the banking industry in six Midwestern states, Bantel and Jackson (1989) found that the more heterogeneous (in terms of job expertise) the decision-making teams, the more frequently the bank adopted new, innovative practices.

Overall, whether for better or worse, the range of skills and abilities a group can access in its diverse members affects its performance on creative and decision-making tasks. Laughlin and Bitz (1975) used a word-association task to compare the performance of groups composed of members with dissimilar ability levels with the performance of individuals whose ability was equivalent to that of the highest-ability group member. They found that the groups outperformed the high-ability individuals. Their findings suggest that high-ability members can benefit from interaction with others who have less ability, perhaps because the high-ability individuals take on the role of

Table 10.3 **Impact of Group Composition on Outcomes**

Types of Outcomes	Personal Attributes	Abilities and Skills
Production tasks	The few studies found mixed results, so no clear effect of group composition on performance is proved.	The few studies found that heterogeneity of types and levels of ability increases productivity.
Intellective tasks	Overall, there are not enough studies to allow a conclusion to be drawn. Mixed-sex groups may outperform same-sex groups.	Almost no directly relevant research.
Decision-making tasks	Heterogeneous groups outperform homogeneous groups.	Heterogeneity of ability levels is beneficial.
Cohesion	Heterogeneous groups are somewhat less cohesive and have higher turnover rates.	Almost no direct research.
Conflict	More conflicts tend to occur in heterogeneous groups.	Almost no direct research.

teacher, which leads them to sharpen their own thinking. Or perhaps the questions and input of more naive members encourage the more expert members to re-examine the assumptions and rules they automatically use when dealing with issues and problems in which they are experts (Simon, 1979). This re-examination increases the likelihood that unwarranted assumptions are reconsidered and rules are re-examined for exceptions.

Overall, the evidence indicates that when working on complex, nonroutine problems (a situation that requires some degree of creativity), groups are more effective when composed of individuals with diverse types of skills, knowledge, abilities, and perspectives. The results of the research on group composition and task performance are summarized in Table 10.3.

Other Outcomes

Other group outcomes affected by diversity among group members include absenteeism, turnover, and satisfaction. Often, these other outcomes are nearly as important as group performance to groups and organizations (Nadler, Hackman, & Lawler, 1979; Schmidt, 1974). Absenteeism, turnover, and satisfaction levels largely are determined by the levels of cohesion and conflict that exist in a group. A group that does not handle diversity well may not achieve the necessary level of cohesion that keeps a group together. It also may not handle other types of conflict well, leading to higher levels of absenteeism and turnover and lower levels of satisfaction among group members.

Research on the topic of how group diversity affects levels of group cohesion and conflict has come to a variety of conclusions. Haythorn (1968), for one, reviewed evidence and concluded that the effects of *personality heterogeneity–homogeneity* on cohesion depended on a number of factors, including personality characteristics, task

characteristics, and extent of interpersonal contact. Bantel and Jackson (1989), in their field study of decision-making teams at 119 banks in six states, found no relationship between team heterogeneity and cohesiveness. Jackson, Brett, Sessa, Cooper, Julin, and Peyronnin (1991), in a follow-up study, found that the demographically homogeneous teams had lower turnover and were more likely to fill vacancies with employees from inside the firm, both of which may indicate higher cohesion.

Turnover tends to be higher in work groups composed of members who are more diverse with respect to their *ages* and *years of organizational tenure* (e.g., Jackson et al., 1991; McCain, O'Reilly, & Pfeffer, 1983; O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989). Turnover also is higher in groups whose members are heterogeneous in terms of college alma mater, curriculum studied, and industry experiences (Jackson et al., 1991).

Attitude similarity has been found to be related mildly to group cohesion. Some evidence exists that people are attracted to others with similar attitudes (Byrne, 1971; Heider, 1958; Newcomb, 1961) and that group members tend to become more similar in their attitudes as they interact over time (Newcomb, 1956). Terborg, Castore, and DeNinno (1976), however, conducted one of the few studies in which attitudes were assessed directly and then used to assemble groups. In their longitudinal investigation of student groups, cohesiveness was assessed at six points in time. At each assessment, cohesiveness was greater in the groups composed of members who had similar attitudes. The magnitude of the effect of attitude similarity on cohesiveness did not approach statistical significance, however, until the last three assessments.

Finally, heterogeneity among group members promotes increased argumentation and more conflict (Nijhof & Kommers, 1982). Such conflicts can be beneficial for completing complex problem-solving tasks (Cosier, 1981; Janis, 1972; Johnson & Johnson, 1979, 1989, 1992a; Schweiger, Sandberg, & Rechner, 1989; Schwenk, 1983). Review Chapter 8 for a discussion of how conflict and controversy can lead to improved group performance and effectiveness.

Disadvantages of Homogeneity of Membership

The alternative to having groups with diverse members is to build a homogeneous group. Although this option may sound like a good way to improve group performance, group homogeneity has a number of disadvantages. *First*, homogeneous groups may lack the controversy and clash of perspectives so essential to high-quality decision making and creative thinking. Too many members who think alike and see the world the same way make for a dull and mediocre group. *Second*, such groups tend to avoid taking risks (Bantel & Jackson, 1989) and therefore, may miss opportunities to increase their productivity. *Third*, they more frequently engage in groupthink (Janis, 1972). *Fourth*, they tend to function best in static situations; they have trouble adapting to changing conditions.

Bringing diverse individuals together does not result automatically in positive outcomes, however (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Proximity is a necessary condition for the positive potential of diversity to be realized, but it is not sufficient in itself. What proximity does create is visibility and initial contact. The initial contact often is dominated by *interaction strain* (individuals feel discomfort and uncertainty as to how to behave). Interaction strain inhibits interaction, creates ambivalence, and fosters atypical behavior such as overfriendliness followed by withdrawal and avoidance.

Under competitive and individualistic conditions, furthermore, pluralism and diversity may cause problems. Diversity can result in lower achievement due to increased difficulties in communication and coordination. It can create threat, defensiveness, increased egocentrism, and closed-minded rejection of new information. Direct interaction among diverse individuals in competitive situations also can create negative relationships characterized by hostility, rejection, divisiveness, scapegoating, bullying, stereotyping, and prejudice, all of which are discussed in the next section.

Conclusions

A number of problems can be found with the existing research on group composition and how it affects groups' interactions and outcomes. *First, in considering member heterogeneity, it is difficult to determine what attributes are important.* The research has focused on personal attributes (such as personality, attitudes, gender, ethnicity) and skills and abilities. These two categories have been focused on because they can be measured and group members can be selected based on them. It is not clear that they are the variables that affect team performance, however.

Second, no one attribute is likely to make much difference in the complexity of real work. Thus, multiattribute research may be more important. Instead of studying the impact of gender, ethnicity, age, or cognitive style, studies that track composition along all of these dimensions simultaneously are needed.

Third, organizations employ people to perform a wide variety of both simple and complex tasks that involve perceptual and motor performance, intellective performance, creativity, and judgmental decision making. Groups may be working on a variety of tasks simultaneously, and the tasks they are doing today may not be the same as those they will work on tomorrow. Over time, the tasks a group faces are unpredictable; therefore, the safest thing to do is to maximize the heterogeneity in the group.

Fourth, it is difficult to determine what is and is not diversity. What outsiders may define as heterogeneity may not be perceived as such by insiders. Turner (1987), in his discussion of self-categorization theory, argues that many group phenomena (including cohesiveness and cooperation) are influenced by the self-categorizations of group members. Specifically, psychological ingroups form when people perceive themselves to be relatively similar to one another in some way(s) and relatively different from others, who are viewed as the outgroup. Thus, in order to judge whether a group is heterogeneous or homogeneous with respect to an attribute, it is important to consider how the group defines diversity in that regard.

Fifth, little is known about precisely how group composition and tasks interact to affect performance. Thus, recommendations cannot be made about the procedures and strategies group members should use to make their diversity work for them and improve their productivity. If not enough is known to make recommendations about specific, limited, artificial situations, then in the complex real world, recommendations about using heterogeneous groups are impossible.

Finally, group members simultaneously are both heterogeneous and homogeneous. Each person has hundreds of characteristics and abilities. Members who are homogeneous on one or two attributes are heterogeneous with respect to others. Conversely, members who are heterogeneous with respect to several attributes still share other common attributes. In truth, it is nearly impossible to create a completely homogeneous group. *Clearly, it is unrealistic to cope with the diversity of people by attempting to completely control the composition of groups.* Instead, we need to find ways to manage groups to ensure that the positive consequences of heterogeneity are maximized and the potentially negative consequences of heterogeneity are minimized.

Because diversity is inevitable and ever increasing, the choice to avoid diversity does not exist for most people. In school, on the job, and in the community, you interact with people who are different from you in many ways, whether or not you wish to do so. The promise of diversity far outweighs the problems as long as the individuals involved understand how to capitalize on the benefits while avoiding the pitfalls. The greater the understanding of human relations, for example, the more constructive the results of diversity will be.

BARRIERS TO INTERACTING WITH DIVERSE PEERS

We know that diversity among group members is an important resource that can be utilized to improve the group's productivity. We also know that doing so may not be easy. A number of barriers exist to interacting effectively with diverse peers (Johnson, 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 1999b). They include stereotyping, prejudice, the tendency to blame the victim, and cultural clashes.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes can be found everywhere, and everyone has them. Stereotypes are a product of the way the mind stores, organizes, and recalls information. They are used to describe differences among groups and to predict how others will behave. They reduce complexity, help us make quick decisions, fill in the gaps in what we know, help us make sense out of who we are and what has happened to us, and help us create and recognize the patterns needed to draw conclusions. In and of themselves, stereotypes do not necessarily have to be bad. Unfortunately, stereotypes often are the basis for unfairness and injustice in the way people deal with one another.

The term *stereotype* was first used in the eighteenth century to describe a printing process designed to duplicate pages of type. In the nineteenth century psychiatrists used the term *stereotypy* to describe a behavior of persistent repetitiveness and unchanging mode of expression. Modern use of the term *stereotype* originated with Lippmann (1922) in his book, *Public Opinion.* He argued, "there is neither time nor opportunity for intimate acquaintance. Instead we notice a trait which marks a well known type, and fill in the rest of the picture by means of the stereotypes we carry about in our heads" (p. 59).

In modern usage, a **stereotype** is defined as a belief that associates a whole group of people with certain traits. Stereotypes (1) are cognitive; (2) reflect a set of related beliefs rather than an isolated bit of information; (3) describe attributes, personalities, and characters so that groups can be compared and differentiated; and (4) are shared by individuals and groups holding them (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1979). In these ways, stereotypes

function as simplifiers and organizers of social information. They reduce the complexity of the social environment and make it more manageable.

People form stereotypes in two ways. First, they categorize by sorting single objects into groups rather than thinking of each one as unique. Second, they differentiate between ingroups and outgroups. People commonly assume that the members of outgroups are quite similar but recognize that the members of the ingroup they identify with are quite diverse (*outgroup homogeneity effect*). The failure to notice differences among outgroup members may result from lack of personal contact with people from these outgroups. A white person, for example, may see all Hispanics as being alike, but someone with a wide variety of Hispanic friends may see little similarity among Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Mexicans, and Argentineans.

An efficient cognitive system, which stereotyping can be, does more than simply make cognition easy for people at all costs. It also helps people in ways that maximize the informational value they can gain for the effort they expend. In this regard, stereotyping is efficient, for several reasons. First, the social categorization that precedes stereotyping reduces the amount of information that must be attended to each time an individual is encountered. In other words, when you view a certain group in one light, you reduce the need to form individualized impressions of each category member (Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Lippmann, 1922). Second, stereotypes expand your base of knowledge by allowing you to infer a person's attributes without having to attend carefully to the person's behavior (Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Medin, 1988; Sherman, 1996). Through the relatively simple act of social categorization, stereotypes allow you to gain a large amount of "functionally accurate" information (Swann, 1984), thus resulting in a beneficial ratio of information gained to effort expended.

Although stereotypes do allow people to make assumptions about individuals in a relatively efficient manner, stereotypes also have the power to cause harm. When taken to extremes, the above-mentioned benefits instead become a crutch that allows people to avoid interacting with others on their own merits. Stereotyping can become a kind of shorthand that unfairly defines individuals, because the person holding the stereotype does not take the time to interact with the individual as his or her own person. When this happens, we end up with stereotypes such as men are more competitive than women, black people are better athletes than white people, Asian people work harder than Americans, and so on. In short, stereotypes can lead to false generalizations aimed at an entire group of people, generalizations that prevent that group from being seen as individuals within a group.

People who hold strong stereotypes often are prone to the *fundamental attribution error.* That is, they attribute negative behavior on the part of a minority-group member to dispositional characteristics. Positive behavior by a minority-group member, on the other hand, is believed to be the result of situational factors. When it comes to judging their own behavior, however, negative behavior is attributed to situational causes and positive behavior is viewed as dispositional. When a minority-group member acts in an undesirable way, the attribution is "That's the way those people are" or "Those people are born like that." If the minority-group member is seen engaging in desirable behavior, the person holding the stereotype might view that individual as "an exception to the rule."

Stereotypes are perpetuated and protected in four ways. *First,* stereotypes influence what we perceive and remember about the actions of outgroup members. The social categories we use to process information about the world control what we tend to perceive and not perceive. Our prejudice makes us notice the negative traits we ascribe to the groups we are prejudiced against. Furthermore, when individuals expect members of an outgroup to behave in a certain way, they tend to recall more accurately instances that confirm rather than disconfirm their expectations. Hence, if an outgroup is perceived to be of low intelligence, individuals tend to remember instances in which an outgroup member was confused in class or failed a test. But they tend to forget instances in which an outgroup member achieved a 4.0 grade point average or became class valedictorian (Rothbart, Evans, & Fulero, 1979).

Second, stereotypes create an oversimplified picture of outgroup members. The act of categorization itself leads people to assume similarity among the members of a category. Even when the distinctions between groups are arbitrary, people tend to minimize the differences they see among members of the same group and to accentuate the differences between members of two different groups. When processing information about their ingroups and outgroups, people develop relatively simplistic and nonspecific pictures of outgroups. The larger the outgroup, the more likely it is that oversimplifications occur. Individuals, furthermore, do more than simply note the differences between their ingroup and the outgroups. They often attempt to emphasize the differences and take actions that discriminate in favor of their own group.

Third, individuals tend to overestimate the similarity of behavior among outgroup members. Because outgroups are perceived to be homogeneous, the actions of one member can be generalized to all. If an older person witnesses one teenager driving recklessly, it may be a short jump for the older person to stereotype that all teenage drivers are reckless.

Fourth, stereotypes can lead to scapegoating. A **scapegoat** is a guiltless but defenseless group that is attacked to provide an outlet for another group's pent-up anger and frustration. The term *scapegoat* comes from a biblical guilt-transference ritual in which a group's sins are conveyed to a goat, which then is sent out into the wilderness, taking the sins along.

Scapegoating might look like this in action: Group 1 interferes with group 2, and group 2 should respond by retaliating against group 1. If, however, group 1 is extremely powerful, too distant, or too difficult to locate, group 2 may respond by turning its aggression on group 3. Group 3, although in no way responsible for the difficulties group 2 experienced, nonetheless would be blamed and thereby become the target of group 2's aggressive actions. Stereotypes of certain outgroups can create a continual scapegoat that is blamed for all problems and difficulties, no matter what their origins.

People who are stereotyped are affected not only by the increased possibility of being treated unfairly by those holding the stereotypes, but also by the possibility of accepting the stereotype themselves. In other words, people who are stereotyped might come to accept the stereotype and believe it, modifying their behaviors and actions to fit the stereotype. When a widely known negative stereotype (e.g., poor intellectual ability) exists about a group, it creates for its members a burden of suspicion that acts as a threat. This threat arises whenever individuals' behavior can be interpreted in terms of a stereotype, that is, whenever group members run the risk of confirming the stereotype.

Why Do Stereotypes Endure?

Following are several reasons why stereotypes persist. Rank them from most important (1) to least important (7). Write down the rationale for your ranking. Find a partner and share your ranking and rationale, listen to his or her ranking and rationale, and cooperatively create a new, improved ranking and rationale. Then find another pair and repeat the procedure in a group of four.

Rank	Reason
_____	The tendency for people to overestimate the association between variables that are only slightly correlated or not correlated at all (i.e., **illusionary correlation**). Many people, for example, perceive that being poor and being lazy are associated. Any poor person who is not hard at work the moment you notice him or her may be perceived as lazy. Low-power groups can acquire negative traits easily and, once acquired, the stereotype is hard to lose.
_____	Your prejudice makes you notice the negative traits you ascribe to the groups you are prejudiced against, and you more readily believe information that confirms your stereotypes than evidence that challenges them. People tend to process information in ways that verify existing beliefs. This is known as the *confirmation bias* (the tendency to seek, interpret, and create information that verifies existing beliefs).
_____	You tend to have a **false consensus bias** by believing that most other people share your stereotypes (see poor people as being lazy). You tend to see your own behavior and judgments as quite common and appropriate, and to view alternative responses as uncommon and often inappropriate.
_____	Your stereotypes tend to be *self-fulfilling*. Stereotypes can subtly influence intergroup interactions in such a way that the stereotype is behaviorally confirmed. You can behave in ways that elicit the actions you expect from outgroup members, thus confirming your stereotype.
_____	You dismiss individuals who do not match your stereotype as exceptions to the rule or representatives of a subcategory.
_____	Your stereotypes often operate at an implicit level without your conscious awareness.
_____	You often develop a rationale and explanation to justify your stereotypes and prejudices.

Steele and Aronson (1995), in studying *stereotype threat*, found that negative stereotypes about blacks' intellectual ability created a "situational pressure" that distracted black students and depressed their academic performance. They suggest that stereotype threat is the reason for the underachievement of black students. Seventy percent of black college students drop out of college (as opposed to about 35% of white students), and the dropout rate is the highest among black students ranked in the top third by SAT scores. In addition, black students with the highest SAT scores fail more frequently than black students with lower scores and at a rate more than three times that of whites with similar scores. When blacks are placed in achievement situations, the negative stereotypes are activated and black students become more self-conscious and work less efficiently. Similar findings were reported on a study of lower-class individuals (Croizet & Claire, 1998). Stereotype threat is eliminated in programs such as the University of Michigan's Twenty-First Century Program, where black and white students are randomly recruited, live together, study together cooperatively, and have personal discussions on social issues.

As the program at the University of Michigan suggests, stereotypes can be changed. The more personal information you have about someone, the less likely you are to stereotype him or her. The more time and energy you have to consider the person's characteristics and behavior, the less you stereotype. The more motivated you are to form an accurate impression of someone, the less you stereotype. The more you perceive that individualized person to be typical of the stereotyped group, the more your interaction changes your stereotypes. What these factors indicate is that in order for stereotypes to change, members of different groups need to interact for prolonged periods of time under conditions in which they get to know one another personally and see one another as being typical members of their group.

Prejudice and Discrimination

To know one's self is wisdom, but to know one's neighbor is genius.

Minna Antrim

To be prejudiced means, literally, to prejudge. **Prejudice** can be defined as an unjustified negative attitude toward a person based solely on that individual's membership in a group other than one's own. Stereotypes taken to extremes, prejudices are judgments made about others that establish a superiority/inferiority belief system. If one person dislikes another simply because that other person is a member of a different ethnic group, sex, religion, or other group, we are dealing with prejudice.

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to regard one's own ethnic group, nation, religion, or culture as better or more "correct" than others. The word is derived from *ethnic*, meaning a group united by similar customs, characteristics, race, or other common factors, and *center*. When ethnocentrism is present, the standards and values of our culture are used as a yardstick to measure the worth of other ethnic groups. Ethnocentrism often is perpetuated by *cultural conditioning*. As children we are raised to fit into a particular culture. We are conditioned to respond to various situations as we see others in our culture react. Based on that conditioning, when we encounter someone from outside that culture, we may react negatively to his or her ways of doing things.

Related to ethnocentrism, **racism** is prejudice directed at people because of their race or ethnic membership. Science indicates that only one human race exists, with many variations, but many people assume biological differences exist as evidenced by physical appearances. Although race has dubious value as a scientific classification system, it has had real consequences for the life experiences and life opportunities of many nonwhite groups. Race has taken on social meaning suggesting one's status within the social system. This status structure introduces power differences as people of different races interact with one another.

Overall, prejudices deal with the formation of unfounded and often inaccurate opinions about a group, leading to biased behavior against members of that group. Other

common forms of prejudice are **sexism,** prejudice directed at someone because of his or her gender, and **ageism,** prejudice against the elderly. Many other types of "isms" can be located in our society; they can be based on anything from physical appearance to religious beliefs.

Traditionally, in the United States, racism, sexism, and other prejudices were expressed through statements that indicated such views merely reflected the "natural world order." Examples include, "Blacks are not as smart as whites" and "Women are too emotional to be good managers." The negative evaluations these types of statements represented were the foundation of institutional and societal measures that preserved separation of groups and social injustice.

Beginning with the civil rights movement in the 1960s, however, much work has been put into making people see one another as individuals, not as members of an ethnic, gender, or other type of group. To a certain extent, much progress has been made on this front. On the other hand, the concept of modern racism posits that if we scratch the apparently nonracist surface of many people, we often find bigotry lurking beneath. Modern racism and sexism camouflage prejudices within more sophisticated language, but the basic beliefs are the same, as evidenced by such statements as "Blacks and women have gone too far; they are pushing for jobs they do not deserve" (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). Racism arises in the modern era because people can see themselves as being fair, humanitarian, and egalitarian while at the same time holding a somewhat negative view of members of groups other than their own.

Having prejudiced thoughts, however, does not necessarily make you a racist (Devine, Monteith, Zuwerink, & Elliot, 1991). Even those who completely reject prejudice may sometimes experience unintentional prejudice, including thoughts and feelings based on prior learning or experiences. In this case, racism is like a lingering bad habit that surfaces despite people's best efforts to avoid it. As with all bad habits, with enough commitment and support, racism can be eradicated.

When prejudice is acted on, it is discrimination. **Discrimination** is an action taken to harm a group or any of its members. It is a negative, often aggressive action aimed at the target of prejudice. Discrimination is aimed at denying members of the targeted groups treatment and opportunities equal to those afforded to the dominant group.

To reduce your prejudices, use of stereotypes, and potential to discriminate, the following steps may be helpful (Johnson & Johnson, 1999b):

1. Admit that you have prejudices (everyone does; you are no exception) and commit yourself to reducing them.
2. Identify the stereotypes that reflect your prejudices and modify them.
3. Identify the actions that reflect your prejudices and modify them.
4. Seek feedback from diverse friends and colleagues about how well you are valuing and communicating respect for diversity.

Blaming the Victim and Attribution Theory

Many people believe the world is a just place where people generally get what they deserve. If you win the lottery, it must be because you are a nice person who deserves some good luck. If you are robbed, it must be because you were careless and wanted to

Errors in Making Decisions About Diverse Others

Making a decision requires gathering information on each major alternative action and inferring from the information which alternative will maximize gain and minimize costs.

Errors in Making Inferences	
Relying on small samples	Small samples are highly unreliable.
Relying on biased samples	People often ignore clear information about how typical and representative a sample is.
Underutilization of base-rate information	People tend to pay more attention to a single concrete instance than to valid base-rate information, perhaps because the single concrete instance is vivid and salient and thus more compelling.
Errors from Cognitive Heuristics	
Availability heuristic	Estimating the frequency of some event by the ease with which you can bring instances to mind. People tend to overestimate the frequency of events that are easy to remember.
Representativeness heuristic	Seeing how well the information matches some imagined average or typical person in the category; the closer the person is to the prototype, the more likely we are to judge the person to be in the category.
Weighing Information	
Positive frame	People avoid risks and opt for the "sure thing."
Negative frame	People take risks to avoid costs.
Postdecision rationalization	The alternative chosen becomes more attractive and the alternatives not chosen become less desirable.

be punished for past misdeeds. Any person who is mugged in a dark alley while carrying a great deal of cash may be seen as "asking to be robbed." Relatedly, most people tend to believe that they deserve what happens to them. Victims of violence, for example, often believe they "deserved" to be attacked because of some misdeed on their part. It is all too easy to forget that victims do not have the benefit of hindsight to guide their actions in the moment, however.

So what happens when situations appear to be unjust? One method is to blame the victim by convincing ourselves that no injustice has occurred. When someone is a victim of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination, all too often he or she is seen as "doing *something* wrong." **Blaming the victim** occurs when we attribute the cause of discrimination or misfortune to the personal characteristics and actions of the victim. The situation is examined for potential causes that enable us to maintain our belief in a just world. If the victim can be blamed for causing the discrimination, then we can believe the future is predictable and controllable because everyone gets what he or she deserves.

Blaming the victim occurs as we try to attribute a cause to events. We constantly interpret the meaning of our behavior and events that occur in our lives. Many times we want to figure out why we acted in a particular way or why a certain outcome

occurred. If we get angry when someone infers we are stupid but not when someone calls us "clumsy," we want to know why we are so sensitive about our intelligence. When we are standing on a street corner after a rainstorm and a car splashes us with water, we want to know whether it was caused by our carelessness, the driver's meanness, or just bad luck.

This process of explaining or inferring the causes of events has been termed *causal attribution*. An attribution is an inference drawn about the causes of a behavior or event. Any behavior or event can have a variety of possible causes. We observe the behavior or event and then infer the cause. When our boss criticizes our work, for example, we can attribute his or her behavior to a grouchy mood, being under too much pressure, disliking us, or the sloppiness of our work.

Causal attribution begins early in childhood, when we begin observing our own behavior and drawing conclusions about ourselves. We seem to have a fundamental need to understand both our own behavior and the behavior of others. In trying to understand why a behavior or event occurred, we generally choose to attribute causes either to internal personal factors or external situational factors. Internal personal factors are such things as effort and ability, while external situational factors include luck, task difficulty, or the behavior/personality of other people. For example, if you do well on a test, you can attribute it to your hard work and great intelligence (an internal attribution) or to the fact that the test was incredibly easy (an external attribution). When a friend drops out of school, you can attribute it to a lack of motivation (an internal attribution) or a lack of money (an external attribution).

Dimensions of Attributions

	Stable	Unstable
Internal	Ability	Effort
External	Task difficulty	Luck

Success Orientation

	Stable	Unstable
Success	Ability	Effort
Failure	Task difficulty	Luck

People make causal attributions to explain their successes and failures. Frequently such attributions are *self-serving*, designed to permit us to take credit for positive outcomes and to avoid blame for negative ones. We have a systematic tendency to claim that our successes are due to our ability and efforts, whereas our failures are due to bad luck, obstructive people, or task difficulty. We also have a systematic tendency to claim responsibility for the success of group efforts ("It was all my idea in the first place, and I did most of the work") and avoid responsibility for group failures ("If the other members had tried harder, this would not have happened").

ulture Clash

Another common barrier to interacting effectively with diverse groupmates is cultural clashes. A **culture clash** is a conflict over basic values that occurs among individuals from different cultures. The most common form occurs when members of minority

groups question the values of the majority. Common reactions by majority-group members when their values are being questioned are feeling:

1. *Threatened:* Their responses include avoidance, denial, and defensiveness.
2. *Confused:* Their responses include seeking more information in an attempt to redefine the problem.
3. *Enhanced:* Their responses include heightened anticipation, awareness, and positive actions that lead to solving the problem.

Many cultural clashes develop in and between groups. These clashes range from threatening to confusing to enhancing. When handled properly, cultural clashes are another form of conflict; they can serve as learning experiences rather than barriers.

Guidelines for Dealing with Diversity

1. Recognize that diversity among members is ever present and unavoidable.
2. Recognize that the more interdependent the world becomes, the more important it is to be able to work effectively with diverse groupmates.
3. Maximize heterogeneity among members in both personal characteristics and abilities in order to maximize the group's productivity and success.
4. With heterogeneous membership comes increased conflict. Structure constructive procedures for managing conflicts among group members.
5. Identify and eliminate barriers to the utilization of diversity (stereotyping, prejudice, blaming the victim, cultural clashes).
6. Ensure that diversity is utilized as a resource by strengthening the positive interdependence within the group in order to create a context in which diversity is a resource, not a hindrance.
7. Ensure that diversity is utilized as a strength by uniting the personal identities of members of diverse groups. Create a superordinate identity based on a pluralistic set of values. Encourage individuals to develop
   a. An appreciation for their gender, religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.
   b. An appreciation for the gender, religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds of other group members.
   c. A strong superordinate identity of "group member" that transcends the differences among members.
   d. A pluralistic set of values concerning equality, freedom, the rights of individual members, and the responsibilities of group membership.
8. Ensure that diversity is utilized as a strength by fostering personal relationships among members that allow for candid discussions that increase members' sophistication about their differences.
9. Ensure that diversity is utilized as a strength by clarifying miscommunications among diverse group members.

As prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination are reduced, the tendency to blame the victim is avoided, and cultural clashes become enhancing rather than threatening experiences. At this point, the stage is set for everyone to recognize and value diversity.

MAKING MEMBER DIVERSITY A STRENGTH

Diversity among members in any group is a potential source of creativity and productivity. For group members to capitalize on their differences, they must

1. Ensure that a high level of positive interdependence exists among group members.
2. Create a superordinate group identity that (a) unites the diverse personal identities of group members and (b) is based on a pluralistic set of values.
3. Gain sophistication about the differences among members through personal relationships that allow for candid discussions.
4. Clarify miscommunications among group members from different cultures, ethnic and historical backgrounds, social classes, genders, age cohorts, and so forth.

Structuring and strengthening positive interdependence is discussed thoroughly in Chapter 3, so here we discuss the subsequent steps a group must take in order to make diversity work for rather than against them.

Creating a Superordinate Group Identity

Diverse individuals from different gender, religious, social class, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds come together in small group settings. The results can be positive if group members get to know one another, appreciate and value the vitality of diversity, and learn how to use their diversity for creative problem solving and enhanced productivity. In order for these measures to be taken, group members must internalize a common superordinate identity that binds them all together. That is, they must arrive at a single group identity that while larger than any individual member also encompasses all of the diversity present in the group. It is the creation of one from many.

Creating an *unum* (one) from *pluribus* (many) is done in four steps. *First, group members must have an appreciation for their own historic, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds as well as their other important personal characteristics.* Members should value and recognize the culture, history, and homeland of their ancestors as part of their personal identities. A *personal identity* is a consistent set of attitudes that defines "who you are" (see Johnson [2000] for a full discussion on developing a personal identity). An identity helps a person cope with stress, provides stability and consistency to the person's life, and directs what information is attended to, how it is organized, and how it is remembered. A personal identity consists of multiple subidentities that are organized into a coherent, stable, and integrated whole. The subidentities include a *gender identity* (fundamental sense of maleness or femaleness), a *cultural identity* (sense of origins and membership in a culture), an *ethnic identity* (sense of belonging to one particular ethnic group), a *religious identity* (sense of belonging to one particular religious group), and so forth. Each of these subidentities should be recognized and valued, and they need to be organized into a coherent, stable, and integrated overall sense of self. Respect for one's subidentities may be the basis for self-respect.

Second, group members develop an appreciation for the historic, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds and other important personal characteristics of other group members. A critical aspect of developing a historical, cultural, and ethnic identity is whether ethnocentricity is inherent in one's definition of oneself. A personal identity that includes one's heritage must be developed in a way that does not lead to rejecting the heritages of other people. The degree to which a group member's identity leads to respect for and valuing of other members' diversity depends on developing a superordinate identity that subsumes both one's own heritage and the heritage of all other group members. Members need to learn how to express respect for diverse backgrounds and value them as a resource that increases the quality of life and adds to the viability of the group.

Third, encourage members to develop a strong superordinate identity of "group member" that transcends the differences among members. Being a member of a work group is decided by circumstance rather than by ancestry or religion. The work group

Being an American

Being an American is creedal rather than racial or ancestral. It is our belief that "all [humans] are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights" (i.e., our commitment to the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Declaration of Independence of the United States) that provides our superordinate identity as Americans. To be an American is to adopt a set of values concerning democracy, freedom, liberty, equality, justice, the rights of individuals, and the responsibilities of citizenship (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). It is these values that form the American creed. The common commitment to equality, justice, and liberty for all unites us as one people, even though we are the descendants of many cultures, races, religions, and ethnic groups. Each cultural group is part of the whole, and members of each new immigrant group, while modifying and enriching our national identity, learn that they are first and foremost Americans. America is one of the few successful examples of a pluralistic society where different groups clashed but ultimately learned to live together by achieving a sense of common nationhood. In our diversity, there has always been a broad recognition that we are one people. Whatever our origins, we are all Americans. It is from the following four steps that the United States creates an *unum* from *pluribus*.

1. I respect, appreciate, and value my religious, ethnic, and cultural background.
2. I respect, appreciate, and value the religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds of others.
3. I have a strong superordinate identity as an "American." Being an American is creedal. I believe in the American creed.
4. I have pluralistic values. I value democracy, freedom, liberty, equality, justice, the rights of individuals, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

unites widely diverse people. In essence, the work group has its own culture that supersedes the individual cultures of members. Members need to learn how to highlight the group's superordinate identity and use it to resolve conflicts based on members' differences.

Fourth, group members adopt a pluralistic set of values concerning democracy, freedom, liberty, equality, justice, the rights of individuals, and the responsibilities of citizenship. All members have a say in how the group operates. All members are free to speak their minds and give their opinions. All members are considered to be of equal value. Every member has the right and responsibility to contribute his or her resources and efforts toward achieving the group's goals. Each member has a right to expect the group to be considerate of his or her needs and wants. All members must at times put the good of the group above their own needs and desires. It is these values that form the group or organizational culture. In the group, members must respect basic human rights, listen to dissenters instead of rejecting them, have freedom of speech, and have open discussion of differences. It is these values that bind group members together. Most groups are or will become a multicultural unit knitted together by a common set of values.

Gaining Sophistication Through Intergroup Relationships

Some people are *sophisticated* about how to act appropriately within many different cultures and perspectives; they are courteous, well-mannered, and refined. Other people are quite *provincial*, knowing how to act appropriately only within their narrow perspective. To become sophisticated, a person must be able to see the situation from the cultural perspective of the other people involved. Much of the information available about different cultural and ethnic heritages and perspectives cannot be attained by reading books and listening to lectures. Only by knowing, working with, and personally interacting with members of diverse groups can individuals really learn to value diversity, utilize diversity for creative problem solving, and work effectively with diverse peers.

To gain the sophistication and skills required to build relationships with diverse peers, you need to develop relationships with people from a wide variety of cultural, ethnic, social class, and historical backgrounds. Many aspects of relating to individuals different from you are learned only from friends who are candid about misunderstandings you inadvertently are creating. To gain the necessary *sophistication* and skills to relate to, work with, and become friends with diverse peers, you need

1. *Actual interaction:* Seek opportunities to interact with a wide variety of peers. You do so because you value diversity, recognize the importance of relating effectively to diverse peers, and recognize the importance of increasing your knowledge of multicultural issues.
2. *Trust:* Build trust by being open about yourself and your commitment to cross-cultural relationships and by being trustworthy when others share their opinions and reactions with you. Being trustworthy includes expressing respect for diverse backgrounds and valuing them as a resource that increases the quality of your life and adds to the viability of your society.
3. *Candor:* Persuade your peers to be candid by openly discussing their personal opinions, feelings, and reactions with you. Sometimes events or language that seem neutral to you is offensive and hurtful to individuals from backgrounds different from yours. In order to understand what is and is not disrespectful and hurtful, your peers must be candid about their reactions and explain them to you.

If you are not sophisticated and skilled in building relationships with diverse peers, you are in danger of colluding with current patterns of discrimination. Collusion is conscious and unconscious reinforcement of stereotypic attitudes, behaviors, and prevailing norms. People collude with discriminatory practices and prejudiced actions through ignorance, silence, denial, and active support. Perhaps the only way not to collude with existing discriminatory practices is to build friendships with diverse peers that allow you to understand when discrimination and prejudice occur.

Clarifying Miscommunications

Imagine that you and several friends went to hear a speaker. Although the content was good and the delivery entertaining, two of your friends walked out in protest. When you asked them why, they called your attention to the facts that the speaker continually used "you guys" even though half the audience were women, used only sports and military examples, quoted only men, and joked about senility and old age. Your friends were insulted.

Communication is one of the most complex aspects of managing relationships with diverse peers. To communicate effectively with people from different cultural, ethnic, social class, and historical backgrounds, you must increase your

1. *Language sensitivity.* Knowledge of words and expressions appropriate and inappropriate for communicating with diverse groups. The use of language can play a powerful role in reinforcing stereotypes and garbling communication. To avoid this, individuals need to heighten their sensitivity and avoid using terms and expressions that ignore or devalue others.
2. *Awareness of stylistic elements of communication.* Knowledge of the key elements of communication style and how diverse cultures use these elements to communicate. Without awareness of nuances in language and differences

in style, the potential for garbled communication is enormous when interacting with diverse peers.

Your ability to communicate with credibility to diverse peers is closely linked to your use of language. You must be sophisticated enough to anticipate how your messages will be interpreted by the listener. If you are unaware of nuances and innuendoes contained in your message, then you are more likely to miscommunicate. The words you choose often tell other people more about your values, attitudes, and socialization than you intend to reveal. Receivers react to the subtleties conveyed and interpret the implied messages behind your words. The first step in establishing relationships with diverse peers, therefore, is to understand how language reinforces stereotypes and to adjust your usage accordingly.

You never can predict with certainty how every person is going to react to what you say. You can, however, minimize the possibility of miscommunicating by following some basic guidelines:

1. Use all the communication skills discussed in this book and in Johnson (2006).
2. Negotiate for meaning whenever you think the other person you are talking with misinterpreted what you said.
3. Use words that are inclusive (e.g., women, men, participants) rather than exclusive.
4. Avoid adjectives that spotlight specific groups and imply that the individual is an exception, such as *black doctor, woman pilot, older teacher,* or *blind lawyer.*
5. Use quotations, references, metaphors, and analogies that reflect diversity and are from diverse sources—for example, from Asian and African as well as European and American sources.
6. Avoid terms that define, demean, or devalue others, such as *cripple, girl, boy,* or *agitator.*
7. Be aware of the genealogy of words viewed as inappropriate by others. The connotations the receiver places on your words are what count, not your own connotations. These connotations change over time, so continual clarification is needed. Some words that seem neutral to one person may be "loaded" or highly judgmental to people of diverse backgrounds. The word *lady,* for example, was a compliment some years ago, but today it fails to take into account women's independence and equal status in society and, therefore, is offensive to many women. Words such as *girls* and *gals* are just as offensive.

SUMMARY

In our increasingly global community, highly diverse individuals interact daily, studying, working, and playing together in small groups. Rapidly growing global interdependence and the increasing emphasis on teamwork result in groups with quite diverse membership. Diversity among members is no longer exceptional or optional; it is the

Important Concepts

Demonstrate your understanding of the following concepts by matching the definitions with the appropriate concept. Find a partner. Compare answers.

	Concept	Definition
____	1. Prejudice	a. Belief that associates a whole group of people with certain traits.
____	2. Ethnocentrism	b. An action taken to harm a group or any of its members.
____	3. Stereotype	c. Unjustified negative attitude toward a person based solely on that individual's membership in a group other than one's own.
____	4. Illusionary correlation	d. Attribute the cause of discrimination or misfortune to the personal characteristics and actions of the victim.
____	5. Discrimination	e. Conflict over basic values that occurs among individuals from different cultures.
____	6. Blaming the victim	f. Conscious or unconscious reinforcement of stereotypic attitudes, behaviors, and prevailing norms.
____	7. Collusion	g. Tendency to overestimate the association between variables that are only slightly correlated or not correlated at all.
____	8. Scapegoat	h. Prejudice directed at people because of their ethnic membership.
____	9. Racism	i. Believing that most other people share their stereotypes.
____	10. Modern racism	j. Guiltless but defenseless group that is attacked to provide an outlet for pent-up anger and frustration caused by another group.
____	11. False consensus bias	k. Subtle forms of prejudice in which people appear, on the surface, not to harbor prejudice but actually do hold prejudiced attitudes.
____	12. Stereotype threat	l. Tendency to regard one's own ethnic group, nation, religion, culture, or gender as being more correct than others.
____	13. Culture clash	m. Whenever group members run the risk of confirming the stereotype.

everyday rule. You will be expected to interact effectively with people with a wide variety of characteristics and backgrounds. Doing so has many advantages, including increased group productivity on a variety of tasks. Heterogeneity in groups also increases the difficulty of developing cohesive relationships among members and increases the potential for conflicts among members. Diversity among members is advantageous, but it is not easy to manage.

Accepting others begins with accepting yourself (see Johnson [2000] for a thorough discussion of self-acceptance). But even for individuals who are quite accepting of themselves and others, there are barriers to building positive relationships with diverse peers. The most notable barriers are prejudice, blaming the victim, and culture clash. Minimizing these barriers makes it easier to recognize that diversity exists and that fundamental differences among people are to be both respected and valued.

For group members to capitalize on their differences, they must ensure that a high level of positive interdependence exists among group members; highlight important mutual goals that require cooperative action and develop a common ground on which everyone is co-oriented. They also must create a superordinate group identity that unites the diverse personal identities of group members. The superordinate group identity should be based on a pluralistic set of values, and it should enable members to gain sophistication about the differences among members through personal relationships that have sufficient trust to allow for candid discussions. Finally, the superordinate identity should help clarify miscommunications that arise when group members from different cultures, ethnic and historical backgrounds, social classes, genders, age cohorts, and so forth work together.

EXERCISE 10.2

Stereotyping

Once you realize that everyone is socialized to be prejudiced and to stereotype others, you need to clarify exactly what stereotypes you hold. This exercise is aimed at clarifying (1) what stereotypes you have been taught about other groups, (2) what stereotypes they have been taught about you, and (3) how the process of stereotyping works.

1. Post each word from the following list on sheets of paper around the room:

Male	Roman Catholic	Hispanic American
Teenager	Southern	Deaf
Asian American	Female	Middle income
Native American	Over age 70	Protestant
Blind	African American	Midwestern
Lower income		

2. Each participant is to circulate around the room, read the various words, and write one stereotype he or she has heard under each heading. Participants are told not to repeat anything already written down. They are not to make anything up. The are to write down *all* the stereotypes they have heard about each of the groups listed.
3. After everyone has finished writing, participants are to read all the stereotypes under each category.

4. Participants discuss:
   a. Their personal reactions.
   b. How accurate the stereotypes of the identities are.
   c. What they have learned about stereotyping others.

EXERCISE 10.3

Interacting on the Basis of Stereotypes

Stereotypes are rigid judgments made about other groups that ignore individual differences. The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate how stereotypes are associated with primary and secondary dimensions of diversity.

1. Divide participants into groups of five. The groups are to role play a discussion of employees of a large corporation about the ways in which the percentage of people of color and women in higher-level executive positions may be increased from 10% to 50%.
2. Give each member of each group a headband to wear with a particular identity written on it for other group members to see. **Group members are not to look at their own headbands.** The five identities are

   Single mother of two young children, receptionist
   Employee with physical disability — Woman, age 72
   White male, company president — Black female, union official

3. Stop the discussion after ten minutes or so. Then have the groups discuss
   a. What each person thinks the label on his or her headband was.
   b. Their personal reactions.
   c. The participation pattern of each member—who dominated, who withdrew, who was interrupted, who was influential.
   d. What they have learned about stereotyping others.

EXERCISE 10.4

Greetings and Goodbyes

This exercise increases awareness of how different cultural patterns of greetings and goodbyes can create communication problems. The procedure is as follows:

1. Divide the class into groups of four. Divide each group into two pairs, Americans and Lakians (from a fictitious country named Lake). If possible, give each pair something such as colored ribbons or armbands that visually distinguish them from each other.
2. Ask all American pairs to go to one end of the room and all Lakian pairs to go to the other. They receive separate briefings.
3. The participants are to role play that they are business associates who are to engage in an informal discussion of general economic conditions in their countries.

a. The **American pairs** are instructed to greet their Lakian business associates in the traditional North American fashion. They are to shake hands, say "Good to see you again," talk about the economic conditions of North America for a while, and then say goodbye by shaking hands and waving.
b. The **Lakian pairs** are instructed to greet their American business associates in the traditional Lakian fashion. They are to give the Americans a warm embrace and then to take and hold their hands for at least thirty seconds. They are to talk about the economic condition of Lake for a while. Then they are to say goodbye by giving the Americans a warm embrace, holding their hands for at least thirty seconds, and telling them how great it was to talk to them.

4. The group of four meets. If they finish the conversation before other groups in the room do, each pair should find another pair from the other country and repeat the experience.
5. The group of four discusses the experience:
   a. What were the cultural differences?
   b. What communication barriers did the cultural differences create?
   c. How did the participants feel during the interchange between the Americans and Lakians?
   d. What are three conclusions about cross-cultural communication that can be drawn from the experience?

The English and their North American counterparts are sometimes seen as being impoverished when it comes to kinesic communication, using words to denote what gesture or tone would express in other cultures. In North America, for example, people often are reserved when greeting others. Body contact is avoided. Yet in some Arab countries, men kiss each other on the street when they meet. Nigerian men often walk hand in hand. Italian men embrace warmly and remain touching when engaged in conversation. In some African countries, handshakes may be extended for long periods of time, and a hand on the knee among males is not an offense. All of these differences create potential communication problems when members of different cultures meet.

EXERCISE 105

Cross-Cultural Communication

The purpose of this exercise is to increase awareness of how cultural differences can create barriers to communication among group members. The procedure is as follows:

1. Form groups of six and divide each group into three pairs.
2. Each pair is assigned a particular cultural identity based on being a citizen of the country of Winkin, Blinkin, or Nod. Their task is to plan how they will act during the exercise based on the information about their country given on their briefing sheet. The pair is to work together cooperatively to ensure that both members understand how to act appropriately as a citizen of their country. They have ten minutes to prepare.
3. Two triads are formed, one member from each country. Each triad is assigned the task of identifying the ten most important principles of cross-cultural communication. They have 15 minutes to do so.

4. The group of six discusses the following questions:
   a. How are the two lists different? How are they the same?
   b. How did members react to their assigned roles? Were there any difficulties in enacting them?
   c. What were the communication barriers among the citizens of the three countries? Why did they occur?
   d. How could the communication barriers be avoided or overcome?
   e. What conclusions can be drawn from the exercise?
   f. What applications does the exercise have for everyday life?

CONFIDENTIAL: TO BE SEEN BY WINKIN CITIZENS ONLY

Behavioral Characteristics of the Country of Winkin

1. **Orientation Toward Touch:** Touch as much as possible, stand and sit close to people, and give a long handshake (about fifteen to thirty seconds) when you greet a person.
2. **Orientation Toward Eye Contact:** Look other people in the eyes when you talk to them.
3. **Orientation Toward Disclosure:** You are interested only in yourself, and you love to share yourself with other people. Talk only about yourself and what interests you. Do not listen to other people—they are boring. You do not want to understand other people better; you want them to understand you. Whenever they start talking, you interrupt them and refocus the conversation on yourself.
4. **Orientation Toward Conflict:** You like to argue for the sake of arguing so that people will pay attention to you.
5. **Orientation Toward Helping Others:** You avoid helping people under any circumstances.

CONFIDENTIAL: TO BE SEEN BY BLINKIN CITIZENS ONLY

Behavioral Characteristics of the Country of Blinkin

1. **Orientation Toward Touch:** Do not touch other people. Stand and sit far away from other people. Greet other people by nodding your head—do not shake hands.
2. **Orientation Toward Eye Contact:** Do not look other people in the eyes when you talk to them. If you happen to look a person in the eyes, look for only a split second.
3. **Orientation Toward Disclosure:** You are genuinely interested in other people. You are inquisitive. You get to know other people by asking them questions about what they are interested in. You listen carefully and let other people finish what they are saying before you speak. You never interrupt. You never talk about yourself.
4. **Orientation Toward Conflict:** You are very uncomfortable with conflict and want to avoid it at all costs. You never argue about a point with which you disagree. Instead you change the subject and try to find something else to talk about.
5. **Orientation Toward Helping Others:** You try to help other people (especially in solving a problem) as much as possible.

CONFIDENTIAL: TO BE SEEN BY NOD CITIZENS ONLY

Behavioral Characteristics of the Country of Nod

1. **Orientation Toward Touch:** Touch people only occasionally when you are talking. Stand and sit about an arm's length from a person. Give a short handshake when you are greeting a person.
2. **Orientation Toward Eye Contact:** Look other people in the eyes for only about three seconds at a time when you talk to them.
3. **Orientation Toward Disclosure:** You want to exchange ideas and thoughts. You share your interests and opinions, and you want other people to share theirs with you. You want to talk *with* other people instead of *to* them.
4. **Orientation Toward Conflict:** You seek reasoned judgments. You ignore who is right and who is wrong. You focus on the quality of ideas, seeking a synthesis or integration of different points of view. You listen carefully, add what you want to say, and make an informed judgment based on all positions and perspectives.
5. **Orientation Toward Helping Others:** You help other people only when it benefits you, that is, when it is rational to do so.

EXERCISE 10.1

Merging Different Cultures

This exercise merges individuals from two different cultures into one group. The procedure for the exercise is as follows:

1. The materials you need to assemble for the exercise are:
   a. Using poster board, construct ten sets of Figure 10.1 for each participant in Atlantis and one set of Figure 10.2 for every participant taking part in the exercise.
   b. One envelope per participant.
   c. One die for each group in Atlantis.
2. Divide the class into citizens of Atlantis and Mu. Assign participants to the society of Mu for every participant assigned to Atlantis. The citizens of Atlantis meet at one end of the room, and the citizens of Mu meet at the other end.
3. At the Atlantis end of the room, assign participants to groups of four and seat each group around a table.
   a. Place enough pieces for ten complete Ts per member in the center of each group (pieces for forty Ts).
   b. Tell the participants

      You are a worker in Atlantis who earns his or her living by constructing Ts. A T is formed using four triangles and three squares. Life is hard in Atlantis, so everyone looks out for "number one." You build your Ts by taking pieces from the center of the table. You will take turns in acquiring the shapes. When it is your turn, you acquire shapes by either (a) taking two pieces from the pile or (b) rolling the die (if you roll an even number [2, 4, 6] you can select that number of pieces, but if you roll an odd number [1, 3, 5] you lose that number of pieces from those you have accumulated thus far, including those composing complete Ts). The member with the greatest number of Ts will be declared the wealthiest and will survive. The poorest will perish. You can begin.

4. At the Mu end of the room, a second instructor divides the citizens into groups of four members and seats each group around a table. Their task is to earn their livelihood by

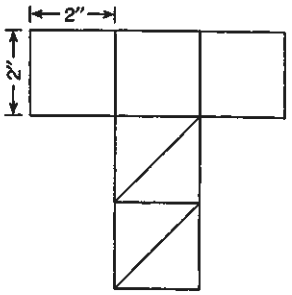


Figure 10.1

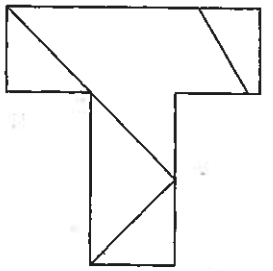


Figure 10.2

constructing Ts. Each citizen of Mu is to form a T using the five pieces as shown in Figure 10.2. The instructor takes the pieces to make up the four Ts for each group and randomly divides the pieces into four envelopes (five pieces in each), making sure that no one envelope contains the correct five pieces for completing a T. One envelope is given to each group member. The instructor tells the participants

> You are a worker in Mu who earns his or her living by constructing Ts. Life is hard in Mu, so everyone looks out for everyone else. There are enough pieces among the members of your group to form one complete T for each member, but no one member has the right combination of pieces to complete his or her T. Mu, however, is a heterogeneous society that does not have a common language. The members of your group, therefore, will not speak to each other. **No verbal communication is allowed.**
>
> Group members must share pieces in order to be successful. You may offer pieces to another group member and accept pieces offered to you by another group member. You cannot offer pieces to more than one person at the same time. You may not ask for a particular piece by pointing, talking, nudging, grimacing, or any other method. When you give a piece to another member, simply hand it to the person without demonstrating how the piece fits into his or her T. You have five minutes to complete this task. You may open your envelopes.

After five minutes, the instructor collects each group's pieces and again places the pieces randomly in the envelopes.

5. The Mu groups repeat the task, except that this time they may use any form of communication they wish. All other rules remain in effect. They have five minutes to complete the task.
6. Bring the Atlantis citizens to join the Mu society. Evenly distribute the citizens of Atlantis among the Mu groups. Add to each group's Ts one additional T for each new member. Take the combined pieces and randomly distribute them in envelopes, one for each member of the integrated groups. Tell the participants

> The citizens of Atlantis are immigrants to Mu. They are to have a part in the work of Mu, and the sooner they learn to earn a livelihood, the better off Mu will be. Members of Atlantis, however, do not speak Mu's language and the meaning of nonverbal gestures in the two societies is quite different. *There will, therefore, be no talking and no nonverbal signaling such as pointing or gesturing.* Your task is to build Ts. The Ts are formed differently from those made in Atlantis. You can begin work.

Stop the groups when all groups have built their Ts or after ten minutes, whichever comes first.

7. Have the groups discuss
   a. How did the members of each society feel about working in integrated units?
   b. How did the two societies differ?
   c. Why was your group successful or unsuccessful in integrating the two societies?
   d. What conclusions can be drawn about work groups consisting of members from more than one society?

[Wheelan 2009]

FIVE

EFFECTIVE TEAM MEMBERS

So much has been written about leaders that it would take at least one large library to house all the books, journals, magazines, and other materials that focus on leadership. Materials that focus on membership still fit neatly in a corner on my desk. Leadership training abounds. In all likelihood, you have attended leadership training at some point in your career. But have you been to membership training? Sadly, I think your answer would be no. Have you ever seen a brochure or ad in a professional journal that describes a membership training workshop? I haven't, and advertisements for training cross my desk almost every day. Besides, who wants to go to membership training? It would be like volunteering for a remedial class in high school. Winners go to leadership training. Only losers need to learn how to be effective members.

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. Unless all members work to ensure group success, it won't happen. Leaders and members all have to put their oars in the water and row in the same direction to reach the group's goals. No one gets to be a bystander in the process of group development.

Actually, I'm getting tired of writing about the lack of work group membership training. The first edition of *Creating Effective Teams* was published in 1999. It's now 2009, and nothing much has changed in the membership training department. Membership training has not caught on. It's not fair to ask people to participate in a group at work without helping them acquire the skills they will need to be effective members. For my part, I no longer offer

leadership training. Instead, I train work groups in effective membership and effective leadership. Members and leaders of real work groups learn together and learn each other's roles. This approach is much more effective because the attitudes and skills participants acquire can be put to use at the group's next meeting. Also, members and the leader can help each other become more effective by supporting each other and offering advice.

This chapter outlines what research tells us about the behaviors and attitudes of effective team members. These are presented in the form of guidelines. None of these characteristics require any special personality type, but they all require good will and some degree of effort. As you read the chapter, think about a group you are working with at the moment. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I follow these guidelines?
- Can I think of times when I exhibited these behaviors and attitudes?
- Can I think of times when I should have exhibited these behaviors but, for some reason, did not?
- In what areas do I need to improve?
- What do I plan to do in order to improve in those areas?

If you're going to be an effective team member, you'll need to take a closer look at your own behaviors and attitudes and at the way you interact with the group. Here are some guidelines to help you evaluate your performance as a group member.

Don't Blame Others for Group Problems

One of the more difficult problems I encounter in working with groups is a general feeling of helplessness that individuals often express. Somehow, members of groups are convinced that they can't make a difference. I hear lots of statements like the following:

"Unless the leader is replaced, there's nothing the rest of us can do."

"These people are crazy. I don't even want to come to meetings."

"Team meetings are like swimming with sharks. I just keep my head down."

"Our meetings are a waste of time. I wish the leader were stronger."

"I'm not even sure what we're supposed to be doing, but I'm afraid to ask."

"The same people talk in circles. I just keep quiet and hope the meeting will end soon."

"There's nothing we can do. Upper management has to get into the act before things will change."

I encounter these feelings of helplessness very often among people in the workplace. Of course, I realize that things can be pretty chaotic in organizations due to downsizing, mergers, new initiatives, recessions, and the like, but I am not convinced that those are the only reasons for the passivity I observe. One reason is the human tendency to blame the other guy.

It will probably surprise many readers to learn that there's a social science term for this tendency to blame the other guy. It's called the *fundamental attribution error*. What it means is that humans tend to attribute the actions of others to personality characteristics without taking other factors into account. Most of the time that's an error.

Our tendency to blame the boss for poor group results without taking budgetary constraints, the lack of group member cooperation, or the lack of other necessary resources into account is an example of an attribution error. When we say that lack of upper management support is the reason for group failure, despite the fact that many group members don't even come to meetings and no one can agree when they do come, that's an attribution error. When members say that Harry is at fault because he just won't shut up despite the fact that no one else seems willing to talk, that's an attribution error.

Researchers also have uncovered some general patterns about how individual group members interpret group success or failure. For example, leaders and powerful members tend to feel personally responsible for both group success and group failure. On the other hand, less powerful members take responsibility for group success but not for group failure. Instead, these members attribute group failure to leaders, powerful members, the organization, upper management, or other situational constraints.

People tend to misinterpret the behavior and motivation of others. This tendency to misinterpret increases conflict. When things aren't going well for the group, we are much more likely to blame others. Although the tendency to

misjudge people, events, and actions is natural, it also has very negative effects on the group and on individuals who are wrongly judged.

For example, I often am called on to assist work groups that are mired in conflict and, as a result, are not within budget or time constraints or are not meeting target goals. There is usually a stable behavior pattern of attacks and counterattacks that has been going on for some time. My goal in working with such a group is to help the group free itself from this pattern and get back on track.

The problem confronting me in such a situation is that because the group is stuck in a pattern of conflict, members tend to focus on blaming outside forces, other members, or the leader for the group's predicament. As long as blaming is the primary pattern, the group will remain stuck. Also, the longer the blaming continues, the more powerless and frustrated group members will feel.

Changing a pattern of blame to one of collaboration and shared responsibility for group functioning and productivity is no easy task, however. Schein, a well-known organizational consultant, wrote that the concept of teamwork is inconsistent with the U.S. emphasis on individualism and personal responsibility. Consequently, if the members accept shared responsibility for group function, each member will feel compelled to accept personal blame for group failure as well. Resistance to any information that disconfirms the belief that the group's problems are due to the actions of individual members, the leader, or authority figures external to the group is the inevitable result. Unless group members begin to see the situation differently, no change will occur.

One of the most powerful ways I have found to help members change their view of the situation is to talk with them about the normal human tendency to blame the other guy. Once members realize that they have made a mistake, they begin to look for other factors that are inhibiting progress. From that point on, changes happen fairly rapidly. Simply put, blaming is a symptom of a negative group pattern. Blaming is almost never a statement of fact. It is rare that one person is responsible for a group's problems. I believe that it is best to assume that is never the case, because that stops the blaming, which often leads the group in a positive direction.

Because I've heard it so many times before, I can almost hear some readers saying that, in their case, the leader really was to blame. Others are thinking it really was that member Harry's fault. Still others are thinking that upper management really was to blame.

I hear these statements so often it seems as if every leader, on every continent, is incompetent. I hear these statements so often that it seems as if every group, on every continent, contains an incompetent, evil, or mentally unbalanced member. This is simply not the case. Most groups contain people who are trying to do a good job. They may not know how. They may not be socially skilled, but they are trying.

My advice is to give everyone the benefit of the doubt not just for his or her sake but for your own and the group's sake. Blaming does not help. It only starts cycles of revenge and retaliation. Instead, find other factors that might be blocking group progress and fix them. Use some of the checklists in this book to help you determine other things to focus on. You'll be surprised at what happens when you do that. Things will start to get better.

By the way, I want to encourage people in management roles to start taking this advice as well. Stop replacing leaders or group members for alleged incompetence. Give teams the resources and training they need to work together effectively. Supply consultants, if necessary. All of us can make attribution errors, and the human cost of these errors is very high.

I had two reasons for starting this chapter by introducing the reader to this human tendency to blame the other guy. First, it pains me to have repeatedly witnessed these misjudgments and their aftermath (e.g., transfers, firings, hurt feelings, and stress). Second, it means that all group members and leaders have responsibility for group success and group failings. The rest of the organization does also. Chapter 2 outlined what we know from research about what organizations can do to help the groups functioning within them. Chapter 6 will outline what leaders can do to help their groups be successful. This chapter outlines what members can do to help their group be successful. Everybody shares in the responsibility, and that's the truth.

Encourage the Process of Goal, Role, and Task Clarification

Encouraging the process of goal, role, and task clarification is simple to implement. All it means is that when you don't understand what is going on, ask questions until you do. It helps to ask questions of the group and not just the leader, because the discussion that follows will be richer and more likely to really clarify things for everyone.

Although this is a very simple thing to do, in the early stages of group development, people hesitate to ask questions. This reticence is quite natural, but try to overcome it a little. Even if you ask only one question of the group, it will make a difference.

Many people have told me that they are afraid to ask questions for fear of being perceived as incompetent or naïve. I am quite aware that image is seen as an important thing at work, but image is not everything. Even if image is very important, asking clarifying questions is unlikely to hurt your image. In fact, it may improve it. Others are most likely to see you as helpful, courageous, or down to earth for asking clarifying questions. None of those qualities is bad for your image.

Encourage the Adoption of an Open Communication Structure in Which All Member Input and Feedback Are Heard

It won't surprise most readers to learn that some people talk more than others during meetings. Of course, some people are just shy or have less need to be heard than others do. However, many talk less because they do not feel invited to speak. This has happened to most of us at one time or another. You go to the first meeting of a group, and few people talk to you. When you do say something, very few people respond to what you have said. Think about the kind of group that was and the kind of people it contained. Was there anything about you that was different from others? Were you

- One of the oldest in the group?
- One of the youngest in the group?
- New to the organization or group?
- One of only a few women in an otherwise male group?
- One of only a few men in an otherwise female group?
- The only one from your profession or area?
- One of only a few minorities in the group?

Were there any other obvious differences between you and other group members?

People tend unconsciously to classify others and assign high or low status to them based on external characteristics, especially during early meetings.

Sometimes, it can be things as seemingly meaningless as height, clothes, mannerisms, and the like that get you classified into a high- or low-status position in a group.

By the way, people aren't bad when they classify others and assign them high or low status based on that classification. We all do it, all the time, sometimes without even being aware of what we are doing. In some cases, our tendency to do this can be very helpful. It can keep us out of harm's way. In work groups, however, our tendency to do this can be quite detrimental.

In the beginning of a group, communication patterns get established very quickly. Who talks to whom and who gets to talk a lot or a little become clear within a few meetings. No one talks about this. It just happens. The problem with this is that who talks to whom and who gets to talk a lot or a little usually are determined by status characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and organizational position. Once a person is assigned a position in the food chain, it's hard to break out of it.

For example, women and minorities still tend to be assigned lower status in groups. As a result, they are expected to talk less, and they may be assigned less influential group roles. They often report dissatisfaction with their lower status, and other group members sometimes report uncertainty about the status of minority and female group members. Although this is beginning to change, we still have a long way to go before this tendency to assign lower status to members of certain groups is eradicated.

Group performance suffers when member role and status assignments are inappropriate or when member contributions are ignored. Potentially valuable contributions are overlooked, and goal achievement and productivity suffer as a result. Researchers have identified individual strategies and group conditions that increase the status of women and minorities in groups, however. These strategies may be helpful to any person whose group role or status is not commensurate with his or her abilities.

People who do not accept the lower status assigned to them increase the likelihood of improving their position in the group. People who act in group-oriented, as opposed to individual-oriented, ways tend to improve their group status as well. Also, people who demonstrate their competence and abilities to the group tend to increase their status, especially if they have enough time to demonstrate that competence. Eventually, other group members see these demonstrated abilities, and there is no longer a need for the person to prove his or her worth to the group.

Although research has focused mainly on women and minorities, the same advice works for anyone who is perceived as lower in status for whatever reasons. On the individual level, the research suggests that the following strategies can help to elevate one's status in the group:

- Diplomatically resisting an inappropriate role assignment or status
- Demonstrating one's competence and abilities
- Acting in a cooperative, group-oriented way

On the group level, time aids the process of redefinition or reassignment of roles and changes in communication patterns. There's also another factor that helps tremendously. When all members take responsibility to ensure that everyone is heard from and that they are all clear about and comfortable with their roles, the chances of group success increase. Valuable input and skills will be used instead of lost.

Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to be heard can be as simple as stopping periodically to check in with everyone. It takes only a few minutes but can make a big difference in group success.

Promote an Appropriate Ratio of Task and Supportive Communications

In Chapter 3, the importance of supportive comments to group success was discussed. Statements focused on the group's work task also are very important, of course. If we engage only in supportive conversation, we may feel better but won't get much work done. Members of work teams that are successful spend between 70% and 80% of the time talking about goals and tasks. That means that out of 100 statements made by team members, 70 to 80 are work oriented. The next most common kind of statement made in high performance teams is supportive. The remainder are statements that express disagreement, focus on topics unrelated to the task, or express some form of dependency. If the proportion of these various kinds of statements changes very much, the group will be less successful.

What this means in practical terms is that when the group strays into an extended conversation about a football game, it is helpful to try to refocus the discussion on the task at hand. Likewise, if the group has been intensely

discussing work tasks for an extended period of time, it might be helpful to compliment the group for its efforts or express support in some other way. Balance in group conversation, as in life, helps a lot.

Promote the Use of Effective Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Procedures

Before I discuss the process of problem solving and decision making, it is necessary to bring up an important question: Who should participate in solving problems and making decisions? Most organizations encourage workers at all levels to participate in these important processes. However, research suggests that not all employees are capable of contributing to the problem-solving or decision-making process. Some people simply are not interested in these processes, and others do not think they know enough to be of help. To solve problems, group members need expertise in the problem area, confidence in their ability to help solve the problem, knowledge and experience related to the problem, interest in participating, and problem-solving skills.

Effective methods for problem solving and decision making have been studied by a number of researchers. Their results overlap. For example, Shaw, a social psychologist, stated that effective group problem solving and decision making consists of four steps:

1. Recognizing the problem
2. Diagnosing the problem
3. Making the decision
4. Accepting and implementing the decision

Others have outlined a process, similar to Shaw's, that includes the following:

1. An orientation phase
2. A discussion phase
3. A decision phase
4. An implementation phase

Each of these phases has significant impact on the quality of a group's solutions and its overall productivity. For example, during the orientation phase, it is helpful to avoid dwelling on the problem because focusing on deficiencies may lead members to become defensive. Instead, it is useful to begin by discussing good solutions that have been effective and investigating solutions developed by teams in other organizations that have proved to be effective. This puts a positive spin on the process and may expand the group's solution options. Then, the problem is defined and strategies are outlined for solving the problem. Strategies include such things as how to gain needed information about the problem, how to analyze the information, and how to make the final decision. Research tells us that groups that outline these strategies in advance are more successful than are those that do not. Unfortunately, many groups spend little or no time planning strategies for problem solving and decision making. Some groups consider it a waste of time, even if members have been made aware of the fact that planning improves solution quality and group performance.

The amount of time spent discussing the problem and potential solutions increases the quality of the outcome. The amount of member participation in the discussion relates to the quality of the group's solution and overall effectiveness as well. Again, many groups do not spend adequate time discussing an issue. In some cases, a group will discuss only a few alternative solutions.

Groups can make the actual decision in a number of ways. The group may delegate the responsibility for the final decision to an individual, a subgroup, or an expert. Member inputs can be averaged to form the basis for decision. Group members can vote on alternative proposals or may choose consensus as their decision-making method. *Consensus* refers to reaching a decision that is agreeable to all members. Efforts to determine which of these methods is best have been unsuccessful. People like the consensus method, but it does not necessarily produce better decisions. In general, people tend to like any method as long as they can live with the final decision. It is certain that participation in the decision-making process increases member satisfaction, however. It may also increase performance to some extent.

I want to insert a word of caution about using consensus inappropriately. In the last paragraph, I defined consensus as the process of reaching a decision that is agreeable to all members. This does not mean that all members would rate that proposed solution as their first choice. It simply means that they can live with that decision.

Many people think that consensus means that everyone must agree 100% with the proposal. If that is not the case, they believe, then consensus has not been reached. This way of looking at consensus is very dangerous. If one person objects, the group cannot move forward. Viewed in this way, consensus is more like tyranny. One person can stop the group in its tracks. To avoid this potential pitfall, I recommend a modified version of consensus in which members assume that consensus exists if 70–80% of the members agree.

Implementing and evaluating group decisions are key elements in the process. Ideally, evaluation is built into the process, and the results of the evaluation form the basis for the group's next problem-solving process. Many of us have sat on committees and made recommendations that were never implemented. This is often the case when the group making the decision does not have the authority to implement its solution. Nothing is as demoralizing to a group. It is incumbent on the group, then, to interact with other groups that will be involved in implementation throughout its deliberations. This increases the likelihood of successful implementation of group decisions.

These findings suggest that problem solving and decision making are enhanced when groups outline, in advance, the strategies they will use to solve problems and make decisions. Discussing alternative solutions, ensuring implementation and evaluation, and involving all members in these processes also are associated with high-quality problem solving and decision making.

Encourage the Establishment of Norms That Support Productivity, Innovation, and Freedom of Expression

You might be surprised at the number of groups I encounter that don't expect to generate the best possible product or result. I hear about what group members think they can get away with and about why time constraints, policies, and lack of resources will prevent the group from doing a good job. Although some of these constraints are very real, if a group agrees to mediocrity, that is what it will get. When groups agree to do the best possible job and to remove as many obstacles from their way as they can, excellence is the likely result.

Freedom of expression was discussed earlier when I advocated the development of an open communication structure. If members do not feel free to offer their ideas about things, it will be difficult for the group to be

successful. In this section, I would like to add a few additional comments about freedom of expression.

Research on the effect of diversity in work group procedures and productivity has not led to unanimous conclusions. Some findings suggest that diversity improves work group performance, but other findings conclude that diversity has negative effects on performance. Surface-level differences, such as ethnicity, gender, race, and age, have been found to have negative effects on group processes and performance. Underlying differences, such as personality, education, and life experiences, do not have as much impact on work groups. Interpersonal conflicts have very harmful effects on groups, however. Whether those conflicts are instigated by diversity, personality, or gender, these conflicts can have very negative effects on work groups. Sometimes diversity increases interpersonal conflicts. However, diversity also can increase team learning, problem solving, and innovation.

It may be that the contradictions in research findings result from the significant increases in racial and ethnic diversity not only in the United States but also in countries all over the world. Social scientists are capturing glimpses of the rapidly changing makeup of populations across the globe and our efforts to become more inclusive.

In the meantime, what can work group members do to improve group performance and increase the participation of all members? Fortunately, the research is quite clear about one thing. Group members need to avoid interpersonal conflicts and embrace task conflicts. Functional differences between members, such as expertise, background, and educational level lead to task conflicts, which are necessary for effective problem solving, decision making, and high performance. If team members focus on the work and avoid interpersonal conflicts, diversity of all types becomes a resource. Members learn from each other, make better decisions, and improve group productivity and effectiveness. To benefit from diversity, everyone must be heard and involved in the discussion.

Go Along With Norms That Promote Group Effectiveness and Productivity

Norms are collective value judgments about how members should behave and what should be done in the group. Norms are necessary if group members are to coordinate their efforts and accomplish their goals. Establishing rules or norms

about unimportant things or the wrong things has a chilling effect on groups, however. If individuals cannot express dissent, for example, things will not go well.

Sometimes norms get established about unimportant things. For example, I know of groups in which members are expected to eat lunch together every day. In other groups, members are expected to come to work at least an hour before work actually begins. Norms like these may inhibit individual freedom and cause resentment.

On the other hand, some degree of coordination and conformity is necessary for group success. It is important, then, to go along with norms that promote group effectiveness and productivity. Although you might prefer a different way of doing things, if the established norm is likely to work, conformity is advised.

Which norms encourage productivity? Research tells us that norms encouraging high performance standards and effectiveness increase team productivity. Shared expectations of success also support productivity. A norm that encourages innovation increases the likelihood of higher productivity as well. Norms and values that support superior quality, service, innovation, and attention to detail significantly increase team effectiveness and productivity. Make sure that your team has norms like these and does not create other norms that block effectiveness, and things will go well.

Promote Group Cohesion and Cooperation

The following are some of the positive effects of cohesion in groups:

- Increased conformity
- Increased group influence over its members
- Increased member satisfaction with the group
- Increased group integration
- Increased cooperation

Cooperation, which is facilitated by cohesion and shared goals, has many positive effects on group functioning. The characteristics of cooperative groups are as follows:

- More effective communication
- Friendlier group atmosphere

- Stronger individual desire to work on group tasks
- Stronger commitment to the group
- Greater division of labor
- Greater coordination of effort
- Greater productivity
- Increased trust and the development of lasting agreements
- Increased ability to resolve conflicts

A word of caution with regard to cohesion is appropriate at this point. High levels of cohesion, in conjunction with certain factors, can have negative effects. That is, a group can make poor or, in some cases, dangerous decisions due to an overriding wish to maintain unity and cohesion. This wish can lead the group to overlook other choices or courses of action. A cohesive group may be in danger of making a poor decision, a condition called *groupthink*, in the following circumstances:

- When groups deliberate in isolation and do not report or check their conclusion with others outside the group, the possibility of poor decisions increases.
- If the group's leader controls the discussion and makes his or her positions clear from the outset, poor group decisions are more likely.
- If the group is faced with an important and stressful decision, the tendency to decide quickly in order to reduce the stress increases. This often results in poor decisions.

Cohesion alone does not pose a threat. As long as a group stays connected with others outside the group and has an effective leader, high levels of cohesion will have many positive effects on group productivity. How, then, can group members promote cohesion? Research tells us that when goals and methods to reach those goals are clear, cohesion increases. Also, successful conflict resolution reduces individual fears of rejection and increases trust between members. A feeling of "we-ness," or cohesiveness, results. Finally, although it is rarely clear what causes what in an interacting system, increased communication is associated with increased cohesion and vice versa.

Notice that the research does not suggest that sharing personal feelings, developing personal friendships, socializing outside work, or other similar

things increase group cohesion. It is not necessary to know other group members on a personal level in order to promote cohesion. Working to increase goal clarity and communication should occur in the work group. Conflict resolution should as well.

BOX 5.1 Group Therapy?

I got a call from a group leader. He said his group was a mess. When I asked what was happening, he gave me a lengthy personality profile of each group member. He also told me how each person related to other members and who was feuding with whom. The group's problem was caused by a lack of clarity about goals and tasks. When these issues were straightened out, the "personality problems" went away. Psychoanalysis was not necessary.

Conflicts continue to occur throughout a group's life. In fact, group conflict is almost as common as group cooperation. One could conclude that conflict seriously impairs group cohesion. Although this can be the result, cohesion can also be increased by conflict. Although this sounds paradoxical, it is important to note that in any relationship the freedom to be oneself and to disagree without fear of rejection or retribution increases, rather than decreases, cohesion and trust. Also, conflict provides energy to the group and allows clarification of group values, goals, and structures. All of these have been found to be associated with increased cohesion and trust. Cohesion and conflict are linked. You can't have one without the other, so to speak.

Of course, how conflict is dealt with is the crucial factor in determining its effect on cohesion. Inevitably, conflict is resolved. How it is resolved will determine whether group cohesion is positively or negatively affected. Six methods of conflict resolution have been described by a number of researchers:

- Imposition of the position of an individual or subgroup on other members
- Withdrawal of an individual or subgroup from the group
- Inaction, whereby one or both sides of a conflict do nothing to resolve the conflict

- Yielding, in which one side gives up its position
- Compromise, in which the parties find a solution somewhere between their respective positions
- Problem solving, in which the source of the conflict is located and a mutually agreeable solution is found

The first four solutions have many negative repercussions. Imposition can result in hostility and passive–aggressive behavior on the part of group members. Withdrawal threatens the life of the group and reduces its resources through member loss. Inaction can result in simmering discontent, apathy, or alienation. Yielding may also elicit alienation and covert hostility. Compromise can be viable if the resolution of the conflict seems reasonable and acceptable to all concerned. Problem solving gives the best results, however, because it requires the actual resolution of different perspectives and a new group conceptualization of the issues involved in the conflict.

Some groups navigate their conflicts well, and others disband or become dysfunctional by dealing with their differences ineffectively. What do successful teams do to promote positive conflict resolution? Members of successful teams communicate their views clearly and explicitly. They avoid generalizations and are specific in their communication. They talk about trust and cooperation during the discussion. Members also initially respond cooperatively to others who are behaving competitively. If others continue to respond competitively, successful group members demonstrate their willingness to compete by arguing their position. Although this sounds like an inappropriate strategy, research suggests that it may result in cooperation from others because not to do so would result in continued stress or personal losses. Sometimes, demonstrating a willingness to compete will bring about cooperation from others. Demonstrating a willingness to compete may also result in being viewed as a more formidable opponent.

All of these strategies help maintain a reasonable trust level, which allows negotiations to proceed. Negotiation is an important conflict resolution strategy. Seeking a mutually agreeable, or win–win, solution has been found to increase communication and cooperation. It also tends to reduce the conflict by breaking it down into specific issues that can be dealt with one at a time.

Sometimes, the intensity and depth of the conflict are too great to be solved by the group members themselves. In such cases, a third party can help resolve the conflict. Group and organizational consultants are often asked to assist groups that are stuck as a result of seemingly insurmountable conflicts. This can be a useful strategy for conflict resolution. However, third-party intervention should be sought only if all parties want the help and if the intensity of the conflict is high. This last-resort strategy requires willingness on the part of the group and skill on the part of the third party.

Interact With Others Outside the Group in Ways That Promote Group Integration and Cooperation Within the Organizational Context

Ancona, a group researcher, argued that mature, internal group functioning is not enough to ensure group effectiveness. Groups and their members must interact regularly with the rest of the organization in order to be successful. Groups need support from and information about what is going on in the rest of the organization. Ancona proposed four key external activities that group members should perform. These activities are described next.

Negotiation with other groups and individuals external to the group is necessary to secure needed resources. For example, some group members might be designated to serve on interdepartmental committees or to meet with other groups or individuals in an attempt to influence policies concerning such things as organizational distribution of resources or procedural decisions. Negotiation with other groups is also necessary when conflicts arise.

BOX 5.2 Interspecies Conflict

An organization dedicated to animal welfare reorganized its employees into species-specific teams. Soon after, the Whale team and the Seal team began to fight over resources. The Whale team was accused of throwing its weight around.

Information exchange and scanning involves gathering facts and impressions from other parts of the organization in order to determine current and future conditions and their potential impact on the group. These activities help the group adapt to the environment and make decisions about how to respond to these conditions.

Buffering entails protecting the group from too much external information or pressure. Some members may perform the role of sentry or guard to insulate the group from excessive external demands. Buffering is sometimes necessary because too much input can negatively affect internal group processes. If buffering is used as a strategy for too long, however, it may encourage an isolationist stance that will decrease communication with others and reduce the likelihood of group success as a result.

Strategic management and profile management involve communicating with external individuals and groups in order to influence their perceptions of and behaviors toward your group. How a group is perceived by other groups in the organization affects the group by either increasing or decreasing the willingness of others to provide resources or to work with that group. Groups can consciously help shape their image by planning what information they will share with others.

Support the Leader's Efforts to Facilitate Group Goal Achievement

This chapter began with a discussion of the fact that many group members blame the leader for group problems and failures. Effective team members do the opposite. That is, they support the leader's efforts to coordinate and facilitate the group. Effective team members volunteer to perform tasks that need to be done. They also ask questions for clarification, offer advice to the leader when appropriate, and actively participate in the leadership function in many other ways. Group development and effectiveness hinge on the willingness of members to assume some leadership functions and the willingness of leaders to delegate those functions.

The Effective Member Checklist summarizes what has been discussed about effective membership. Spend some time and check yourself. How could you improve? Encourage other group members to do likewise.

Effective Member Checklist

Please read the statements below. Circle the number that most accurately describes your response to the statement. Use the following key to respond to each statement.

1 disagree strongly	2 disagree to some extent	3 agree to some extent	4 agree strongly

Section I

1. I avoid blaming others for group problems.

   1 2 3 4

2. I assume that every group member is trying to do a good job.

   1 2 3 4

3. I treat people as individuals and don't make assumptions about them based on my preconceived notions about people like them.

   1 2 3 4

4. I do not get bogged down in interpersonal issues or personality conflicts.

   1 2 3 4

Section I Score: _____

Section II

5. I encourage the process of goal, role, and task clarification.

   1 2 3 4

6. I encourage the use of effective problem-solving and decision-making procedures.

   1 2 3 4

7. I encourage the group to outline, in advance, the strategies that will be used to solve problems and make decisions.

   1 2 3 4

1 disagree strongly	2 disagree to some extent	3 agree to some extent	4 agree strongly

8. I work to ensure that decisions and solutions are implemented and evaluated.

1 2 3 4

9. I encourage norms that support productivity, innovation, and freedom of expression.

1 2 3 4

10. I encourage the use of effective conflict management strategies.

1 2 3 4

11. I support the division of labor necessary to accomplish goals.

1 2 3 4

Section II Score: _____

Section III

12. I work to ensure that the input and feedback of every member are heard.

1 2 3 4

13. I work to ensure that we all have a chance to demonstrate our competence and skills in the group.

1 2 3 4

14. I discourage any group tendency to adopt excessive or unnecessary norms.

1 2 3 4

15. I am, and encourage others to be, cooperative.

1 2 3 4

16. In conflict situations, I communicate my views clearly and explicitly.

1 2 3 4

17. I respond cooperatively to others who are behaving competitively.

1 2 3 4

Section III Score: _____

1 disagree strongly	2 disagree to some extent	3 agree to some extent	4 agree strongly

Section IV

18. I act, and encourage others to act, in the best interests of the group.

1 2 3 4

19. When members contribute good ideas, I express my appreciation.

1 2 3 4

20. I encourage and work to achieve mutually agreeable solutions to conflict.

1 2 3 4

21. I support the leader's efforts to coordinate and facilitate group goal achievement.

1 2 3 4

22. I offer advice to the leader when I think the advice will be helpful.

1 2 3 4

Section IV Score: _____

Section V

23. I have negotiated, or would be willing to negotiate, with other groups and individuals to help my group obtain needed resources.

1 2 3 4

24. I share information and impressions I have about other parts of the organization with the group.

1 2 3 4

25. I encourage the group not to overwhelm itself with too much external information or demands.

1 2 3 4

26. I talk positively about my group to outsiders.

1 2 3 4

1 disagree strongly	2 disagree to some extent	3 agree to some extent	4 agree strongly

27. I keep other members of the organization informed about what my group is doing.

1 2 3 4

Section V Score: _____

Section VI

28. When members stray off the task, I diplomatically try to bring the discussion back to the task.

1 2 3 4

29. I go along with norms that promote group effectiveness and productivity.

1 2 3 4

30. I encourage high performance standards.

1 2 3 4

31. I expect the group to be successful and productive.

1 2 3 4

32. I encourage innovative ideas.

1 2 3 4

33. I use what I have learned about group development and productivity to help my group become effective.

1 2 3 4

34. I encourage the group to frequently assess and alter its functioning, if necessary.

1 2 3 4

35. I volunteer to perform tasks that need to be done.

1 2 3 4

Section VI Score: _____

Total Minimum Score: 35

Total Maximum Score: 140

My Score: _____

What Is Your Overall Membership Quotient?

Total Score	Your Membership Grade
126+	A
112–125	B
98–111	C

What Are Your Section Scores?

Section I: Attitudes and Feelings

Total Score	Your Grade
14+	A
12–13	B
10–11	C

Section II: Processes and Procedures

Total Score	Your Grade
25+	A
22–24	B
20–21	C

Section III: Communication and Participation

Total Score	Your Grade
22+	A
19–21	B
16–18	C

Section IV: Support and Encouragement

Total Score	Your Grade
18+	A
16–17	B
14–15	C

Section V: Intergroup Relations

Total Score	Your Grade
18+	A
16–17	B
14–15	C

Section VI: Work and Productivity

Total Score	Your Grade
29+	A
25–28	B
22–24	C

SIX

EFFECTIVE TEAM LEADERSHIP

The belief that leaders are instrumental in the creation of effective teams is deeply rooted in society and in the social sciences. Today's conceptions of leadership are not very different from early views, which described leaders as people with special inborn characteristics that propelled them into leadership roles. Now, although most social scientists reject the notion of inborn traits, many still see leadership as residing in the individual because it is assumed that people can learn how to be effective leaders by acquiring certain knowledge and skills. Hundreds of thousands of managers and executives have attended leadership training programs over the years in order to learn to be effective leaders.

Leaders are thought to facilitate the development of shared understanding and interpretations of reality among group members. They articulate things that have not been explicitly stated before that can provide new visions for the group. Inherent in this position is the assumption that the leadership role is vital to the creation and maintenance of an effective team. This assumption has led some researchers to study the cognitive capacities of leaders in order to determine how effective leaders think about their role. Again, the goal of such studies is to discover effective leadership styles that could then be taught to other leaders or potential leaders.

The old notion of the charismatic leader is experiencing a comeback. In this view, the leader is seen as the one who instills new thinking in followers and redirects group activities. These views of leadership support the assumption that leaders are central to the creation and redirection of group

Maturity and effectiveness in small groups

Endre Sjøvold[1]

Abstract

This paper presents a study of role-structure, group constitution and effectiveness of task-groups. A total of 39 groups from different contexts are investigated and the results are discussed as aspects of group development and effectiveness. Predominant behavior of the groups studied is measured and analyzed using the SPGR (Systematizing Person-Group Relation) method. The construct 'group-constitution' is defined as the balance of four basic group functions and represents one of the measures of group maturity used in this study. Group effectiveness is discussed according to group *purpose*, group *task* and the *context* in which the groups operate. Implications of practical team-building are discussed. The results suggest that the purpose and constitution of a group should be carefully evaluated before team-building activities initiated. It is mandatory that the approach chosen for team-building matches the maturity of the particular group. Creating more than superficial changes in group maturity requires considerable effort over a long period of time.

Keywords: group-effectiveness; group-development; SPGR

Introduction

In this paper findings from studies on groups concerned with considerably different tasks and performing in different contexts are combined and presented as a whole. Included are studies of a total of 39 groups ranging from "real" high performance teams to teams in educational settings. This integrated study focuses the influence of role structure and group constitution on effectiveness. While group structure refers to the distribution of roles, group constitution is defined as the balance of four basic group functions and represents one of the measures of group maturity used in this study (se below). These constructs are discussed in line with a model of group development or maturity labeled SPGR (Systematizing the Group-Person Relation). The question of what it takes to create real change in groups is also discussed.

The sustainable "one-size fits all" assumption

Given the extreme popularity of team-building activities and the considerable spending companies use on these activities, it is surprising that there are only a few reports that evaluate the effectiveness of such interventions. At least in Norway most practitioners base their interventions on a "one-size-fits-all approach" that stems either from fixed phase models like Tuckman's (Tuckman 1965, Tuckman and Jensen 1977), a role preference model like Belbin (1981) or a combination of both. Having worked for more than 25 years with high performance teams and groups under study,

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I still have not found any group that has developed according to a fixed phase model, or identified an "ideal" role structure in any high-performance team. My experience is quite the contrary in that most groups adapt very quickly to the level of development (maturity) and arrange their role structures to fit their task and the context in which they operate. It is very rare to find two teams that show the same role structure or level of maturity. This is true even when looking at high-performance teams. However, there is no reason to doubt the findings of either Tuckman or Belbin. Tuckman's therapy groups surely followed a sequence of "forming", "storming", "norming" and "performing". However, they were therapy groups, not managerial, project or sports teams. Belbin's groups of managers, while conducting their highly structured business game, undoubtedly performed best with what he suggested as the ideal role structure, although it was in the context of that particular business game, not as managers operating in a complex business environment. No documentation exists that supports the assumption that all groups follow the same sequences of development. Nor is there the assumption that one type of role structure is best to meet all situations. McGrath (1991) states that such assumptions rise from the fact that most research has studied ad hoc students groups, and not "real-life" groups in real settings.

The aim of this paper is to suggest alternatives to the "one-size-fits-all" approach. To achieve this purpose we need to look into the nature of group functioning and how groups relate to specific tasks and situations.

Four basic group functions

The concept of 'group functions' was first introduced by Parsons (1951; 1953). The concept is central in our further discussion. When carefully reading the more popular models on group development, we find quite striking similarities. The idea that the predominant behavior of a group differs in the course of its existence seems to be fairly well established. It also seems like most models agree on what behavior relates to what kind of problem the group faces. While Parsons (1953) suggests four basic functions of groups, Tuchman and Jensen (1977) describe four phases of group development and McGrath (1991) four modes in which groups may perform. It is fairly easy to see how the four functions, phases or modes are assumed to meet similar challenges. Even the more psychoanalytical models like Bion's (1961) model of group emotionality reflect similar patterns. For an overview of models for group development, see Chidambaram and Bostrom (1996), Jern and Hempel (1999), Poole and Hollingshead (2004) or Sjøvold (2006). The Parsonian approach is one of the more productive when trying to understand the life of groups. We will rest our discussion in this paper on a model for group development that builds on the Parsonian thinking called SPGR (Systematizing the Person-Group Relation, Sjøvold 1995, 2002, 2006).

The four basic group functions are, according to the SPGR model: 'Control', 'Nurture', 'Opposition', and 'Dependence' (see Table 1). The basic idea is that a group activates the function best suited to meet the specific problem they face. If the problem at hand is instrumental, then the Control function is activated; if the problem is relational, the Nurture function is activated and so on. When one of the functions is activated the predominating behavior of the group members reflects that active function. When the Control function is active, analytical, task-oriented or even

autocratic behavior dominates; when the Nurture function is active, caring, empathic or even spontaneous behavior dominates; if the Opposition function is active, critical, assertive or even self-sufficient behavior dominates; and when Dependence is active, passive, conforming, and obedient behavior dominates. An overview is given in Tables 1 and 2. Since an active group function is always reflected in group behavior, systematic observation of behavior is an efficient tool to investigate these phenomena. This is the approach used to study the groups referred to in this paper.

Group functions, balance and maturity

The construct 'group constitution' is defined as the balance of basic group functions. A group may activate one function to solve a specific problem and activate another to solve another problem. On the other hand a group may be stuck in one function even though that function is not adequate to meet the challenge the group actually faces. This phenomenon is similar to what Bion (1961) refers to as basic assumption groups in contrast to his high-performance 'work group'. The SPGR parallel to Bion's 'work group' is a mature group (Sjøvold 1995, 2005, 2006).

A mature group is a group capable of rapidly activating the group function best suited to meet any challenge at hand. To achieve such flexibility all members of the group need to be capable of performing behavior that supports all of the four functions. In less mature groups members tend to take on roles according to their zone of comfort, and limit their behavior to support one basic function. In such groups one member may be the caring person (Nurture), another person the achiever (Control) and so on. However, in a flexible group communication between members needs to be both distinct and rapid. Perceptions of the situation need to be shared, evaluated, decided and acted upon in a very short period of time. When all members are capable of recognizing and performing behaviors that support all four functions, this process is almost instant. The 'one person–one role' group will be less flexible, since each member perceives the situation and other member's actions as well through the eyes of his or her role. A lot of negotiation needs to be done before the group is able to act.

Balance is an important concept of the SPGR model. 'Balance' is, however, not equivalent to the concept of equilibrium like Bales (1953,1955) describes as a homeostatic controlled status quo. 'Balance' is a constant shift and polarization between active group functions. Then members of a group free themselves from fixed roles and they become capable of performing behavior that supports all functions. This is a state of free flow that is characteristic for highly creative teams (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). A well performing or well balanced group can be compared with a gyroscope. It is the speed of rotation that makes it stable and robust. The 'one person–one role' group may balance the group function by having an equal number of supporting roles, but such a group will respond very slowly and be vulnerable to environmental change.

As shown in Tables 1 and 2 there are two more aspects of group constitution used in our analyses, namely *Synergy* and *Withdrawal*. Synergy appears in groups where the basic group functions are well balanced and characterized by engagement and constructive goal-oriented teamwork. At a lower level of maturity where members still commit to their initial role preferences, they tend to restrict themselves from

contributing to the common group work, which in turn results in passive behavior and resistance, i.e. Withdrawal.

Group tasks and effectiveness

Group maturity, as defined here, is closely related to role structure. The more specific roles group members assume the less flexible and responsive the group will be. The interdependence of individual and group development is also obvious. As members expand their behavior repertoire and skills, the group also becomes a better arena for learning. The individual needs the group to develop, and the group will only develop through its members (Mills 1984). Innovative groups have a high capacity to learn and are, in our terminology, mature.

However, all groups do not need to be innovative or mature to be effective. Group effectiveness is a highly flexible concept (McGrath 1991, Gersick 1988, Hackman 1983, 1992, 2002). In this paper we define group effectiveness as how well group resources are mobilized to solve a specific task. Groups may be effective even when operating on a low level of maturity. Effectiveness is always related to group task and context. The more complex tasks are, and the more unpredictable the context is, the more mature the group needs to be for success. If the task is simple or dividable and the context is fairly structured, a fixed role structure may be more effective and more forceful due to its ability to be focused. No creative noise distracts them from fulfilling their task. A team of surgeons and nurses who perform their specialized tasks in a strictly coordinated manner under the senior surgeon's command is a good example.

The SPGR model suggests four levels of maturity. For each level group members achieve new shared capabilities. At the lowest level members share behavior skills that support *Nurture*; at the second, *Dependence* is added; third, *Control;* and fourth, *Opposition*. At the highest level all members are capable of performing behaviors that supports all four functions. In such a group no one has fixed roles. The four levels of maturity are labeled *Reservation, Team Spirit, Production* and *Innovation*. Although the four levels of maturity represent a continuum of accumulating skills, they do not imply a sequence of group development. Our observations indicate that groups tend to adapt the role structure best suited to meet their challenges. For simple dividable tasks, Nurture functions seem to predominate. If the context is structured and the task is fairly simple, behaviors that support Nurture and Dependence functions will dominate. Since most group members are not capable of mastering all functions, these groups need strong leadership. A self-organizing production team in a fairly stable environment needs to be able to both shift its goals and adjust their norms to continuously improving their performance. Thus all members need to perform behaviors that support the Control functions in addition to Nurture and Dependence. If the group has to solve extremely complex tasks under unpredictable conditions, they also need to be able to question every plausible solution before they act. They need to master behavior that supports the Opposition function in addition to the other three.

Groups tend to adjust to the level of maturity best suited for the task at hand. However, the higher levels of maturity require members with well-developed personal skills. If the group faces challenges beyond their competencies, they may end up in

dysfunctional reactions like positive or depressive groupthink (Janis 1972, Granström and Stiwne 1998), polarization and conflict. In such circumstances team-building may be productive. The results presented in this study illustrate groups at different levels of maturity, as well as the patterns of achieving lasting changes in the groups.

Aims of this study

In practical teambuilding it seems like "one-size-fit-all" approach dominates although research shows how different groups are. The aim of this study is twofold; (1) to investigate differences in group constitution and effectiveness related to group task, and (2) to investigate what effort is needed to create lasting changes in teams. To investigate the first aim we studied two high performance teams from different contexts and, to investigate the latter, we studied one cohort of student groups and two cohorts of naval cadet groups.

Method

The material

This study is based on data gathered from four categories of groups, and for two different purposes.

To compare group constitution among different types of high performance teams, we have chosen to study a top national league sports team consisting of 20 members and one high performance (on time, quality and budget) project team consisting of 34 members.

To compare groups and their development we have chosen 27 student groups (five persons in each) and 20 groups from two cohorts of naval cadets (seven in each). The student groups were working on a project that required cooperation and team work for one complete semester. The program is called "Experts in teams" a title that refers to the group that consists of students from different departments at NTNU. None of the students have the same background and no one knew each other before they met at this course. These groups are supposed to develop as a team through their joint project work during a semester. Their team-deliverables are a fulfilled project, usually documented by a written report, and a separate report where the students reflect on the processes in their own group. They make daily notes in special log books to ensure that they record their individual experiences, and perform formalized discussions on the topic of group development. The naval cadet groups are measured during the first year of education in which the cadets stay in the same groups.

The SPGR Instrument

In this paper we base our discussion on the SPGR measures. These are the most recent for the sports and project team and from the start and at the end of the "Expert in team" program. In the first batch of naval cadets, the measures are from the start and at the end of their first year of education. For the second batch, the measures were taken before and after a ten-week journey on a 3-masted barque rigged sail vessel.

All SPGR measures are peer ratings that use the standardized SPGR behavior scale (Sjøvold 2002).

The Systematizing Person-Group Relations (SPGR) instrument consists of a category system for observation of overt behavior in groups and several scales for self and peer ratings (Sjøvold, 1995, 2002). This study is based on peer ratings using a 24-item scale where each item was rated according to whether the behaviors never or seldom occurred (1), sometimes (2), and often or always (3).

SPGR is based on Bales' (1985; 1999) theory of social interaction systems, Parsons' (1953) functional model of group development and Bion's (1961) theory on group emotionality. SPGR inherits the psychometrics of the SYMLOG-instrument ((Bales & Cohen, 1979, Hare, 1985, Koenigs, Hare and Hare, 2002, 2005). However, the three SPGR dimensions have different orientation in the factor-analytical space. The SPGR dimensions are labeled Control - Nurture (C-N), Opposition - Dependence (O-D), and Withdrawal - Synergy (W-S). A short description of the dimensions is given in Table 1.

The pairs of the first two dimensions represent what is defined as basic group functions and the pairs of the third dimension are indicators of a group's maturity. Combined these dimensions describe the group constitution.

Table 1 Elements of group constitution

Group function	Short description
Control	Structure, logic, authority
Nurture	Caring, social orientation, openness
Dependence	Loyalty, conformance, submission
Opposition	Criticism, rebellion
Withdrawal	Passive resistance
Synergy	Engagement, constructive goal-oriented teamwork

The basic group functions are supported by a distinct set of behaviors. How well balanced the behavior of a social system is along the SPGR dimension is a measure of the cultural characteristics of that system. In addition behavior is analyzed along twelve vectors, as shown in Table 2. The vector code indicates which dimension it belongs to; Control vectors are labeled C1 and C2 and so forth.

Table 2. The SPGR behavior vectors

Vector	Code	Typical behavior
Task-orientation	C1	Controlling, autocratic, attentive to rules and procedures
Task-orientation	C2	Analytical, task-oriented, conforming
Relation	N1	Taking care of others, attentive to relations
Creativity	N2	Creative, spontaneous
Loyalty	D1	Obedient, conforming
Acceptance	D2	Passive, accepting
Criticism	O1	Critical, opposing
Assertiveness	O2	Assertive, self-sufficient

Resignation	W1	Sad appearance, showing lack of self-confidence
Self-sacrifice	W2	Passive, reluctant to contribute
Engagement	S1	Engaged, inviting others to contribute
Empathy	S2	Showing empathy and interest in others

Results

Group tasks and effectiveness

The first analysis concerns group tasks and effectiveness in two authentic groups (sports teams and project teams). Table 3 presents the results of the analysis of group constitution for the two teams. These results are discussed in the section on group task and effectiveness below.

Table 3 Group constitution

	Sports team	Project team
Control	3.34	3.41
Nurture	5.60	4.74***
Dependence	6.95	5.26***
Opposition	2.63	1.31***
Withdrawal	1.27	0.25***
Synergy	6.67	6.74

*** p<0.001

As seen from the table, there are significant differences between the two groups for all basic group functions except control and synergy. Both groups are high on Synergy as expected for high performance teams like these, but they are different in group constitution as suggested by the theory. While the sports team emphasizes *Nurture* and *Dependence*, the three group functions *Nurture, Dependence* and *Control*, are relatively more balanced for the project team. In addition the level of *Withdrawal* is lower in the project team, indicating a higher level of maturity.

According to the theory, *Opposition* is supposed to be lower for the sports team. In Table 4 the 12 behavior vectors are compared for the two groups that show significant differences on the N2, D2, W1 and W2 vectors for the two groups. Observation of the *Opposition* vectors indicates that the differences between the two groups are fully explained by the O1 *Assertiveness* vector. This distortion indicates a group of "profilers" more than a group recognized by constructive criticism.

Table 4. The SPGR vectors

Vector	Cod	Sport team	Project team
Control	C1	4.07	4.23
Task-orientation	C2	3.90	3.12*
Relation	N1	6.28	5.99
Creativity	N2	5.58	3.89**
Loyalty	D1	7.87	6.44***
Acceptance	D2	6.50	5.03***
Criticism	O1	1.98	1.74
Assertiveness	O2	5.88	3.38***
Resignation	W1	1.42	1.14**
Self-sacrifice	W2	2.23	1.27***
Engagement	S1	7.32	7.61
Empathy	S2	6.58	7.07

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Group development

The next analysis focused on group development, which means an analysis of any differences between the two rating points. While in the first part we compared two high performance teams, we will compare three different group cohorts in this part of the study. Table 5 presents the results of the analysis of group constitution for the groups of students and naval cadets.

Table 5 Cultural functions

	Student groups		*Naval cadets NA1*		*Naval cadets NA2*	
	Pre	*Post*	*Pre*	*Post*	*Pre*	*Post*
Control	3.15	3.00	4.01	4.10	2.97	3.81***
Nurture	4.71	4.61	5.13	5.64**	4.64	5.50***
Dependence	5.54	5.48	5.45	5.71*	6.21	6.14
Opposition	1.50	1.36	1.76	1.73	1.71	1.90
Withdrawal	1.20	1.09	1.58	1.39	1.04	0.85*
Synergy	6.51	6.54	6.32	6.59*	6.54	7.16***

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

There are no significant changes in the student groups. Changes in the first cohort of naval cadet groups (NA1) from start to the end of the first year are concerned with *Nurture*, *Dependence* and *Synergy*. The second group (NA2) increased their values on *Control*, *Nurture* and *Synergy*, while decreasing values on *Withdrawal* after the ten-week ship journey.

Discussion

We have suggested that group constitution differs in teams at different levels of maturity. Further that group effectiveness is not necessarily related to a high level of group maturity, but depends on the fit between maturity and group task and context. Group constitution of groups that perform well may therefore be quite different. In the first part of this study two high-performance teams at different levels of maturity are compared. The findings support the assumptions given by the SPGR-model.

The more experienced and the higher level of interpersonal skills members of a group have, the more likely it is that it will perform at a higher level of maturity. Lack of individual skills may be a reason for lack of group development, but dysfunctional group norms may hinder even the ability of skilled individuals to contribute. In such instances groups need help to change to a more functional group structure and norms.

The second part of this study compares groups with the sole purpose of developing. Both types of groups are supervised, and use several instruments to obtain feedback to speed up their development. From these studies it seems like developing the groups, and creating a lasting behavioral change, is much harder than a practitioner may wish. The good news, however, is that it is possible.

Group task and effectiveness

The two groups investigated in the first part of the study (sports teams and project teams) are definitely high performance teams. The sports team (a ball sport) performs in the top national league; the project team is responsible for one of the largest and most complex construction projects in Norway. According to the SPGR model, group constitution should differ between these teams due to differences in task and context. While the sports team has a *concrete goal* and a fairly *structured context*, the project team handles a multi-billon project that will run for more than a decade, including changes due to both *political priorities* and new *technology*. One should therefore expect the project team to operate on a higher level of maturity than the sports team, although both teams are the best in their field.

To succeed, the sports team needs to mobilize all resources within a very limited time. During this short time they need to be extremely focused. One of the most critical success factors for such a team is that all members are willing to help each other. The players need to know each others' strengths and weaknesses. The awareness has to be on team contribution rather than on personal prestige. The structure of the context is firm; there are equal numbers of players on both sides, they are dressed in different colors and the game is governed by a set of strict rules. Even the tactic is determined beforehand by the coach. The task is to make more goals than the other team. In theory this is a fairly simple task with few surprises. Such groups need strong leadership.

Members of a sports team need to acknowledge the value of their fellow players and restrict some of their own freedom for the benefit of the team as a whole. In addition they need to obey the rules of the game and, in most instances, the coach. The first kind of behavior supports the *Nurture* function and the latter *Dependence*. Theoretically neither *Control* nor *Opposition* functions are mandatory for optimal performance at this level. There is no need for significant changes in rules, procedures, superior goals or context, and the coach is and will be the boss. The more focused and the more confident the team members are regarding their team superiority, the better, and the less they question the leadership rules or strategy, the better. This describes a typical group at the level of maturity called "team spirit". As shown in Table 3 the predominant functions in this group are indeed Nurture and Dependence.

A project team needs to work steadily in the long perspective and carefully monitor many decisions. In contrast to the sports team where, to a large extent, decisions rest on the coach, it is mandatory that individual members of the project team are responsible for coordinating their resources towards a moving target, and sometimes towards expectations that are ambiguous. Individual members are also expected to advise the project managers when deviations occur and to correct actions. Strong authorial leadership is a threat to a team responsible for such a project, the more self-managed the better. This means a higher dominance of the *Control* function.

Theoretically this team has to operate at the *Production* level of maturity. This is nicely confirmed in Table 3 by the more balanced levels of *Control*, *Nurture* and *Dependence* functions.

Comparing the constitution of the two types of groups, we find some striking differences (Table 3). The scores for both *Nurture* and *Dependence* are significantly larger for the sports team, which fits nicely into our discussion above. There is no statistically significant difference in the Control function between the two groups, so the improved balance shown for the project team is caused by the relative distribution between Control, Nurture and Dependence and not the size of the absolute scores. Both patterns correspond to the assumption given by the SPGR model. Both of the high performance teams scored high on *Synergy*. The sports team shows a significantly higher level of *Withdrawal*, indicating a lower level of maturity. From Table 3 we can see a significantly higher score on *Opposition* that does not fit the assumption given by the SPGR model. Opposition should not be that apparent at this level of maturity. However, considering the more detailed vector analysis shown in Table 4, we find that it is the *Assertiveness* component (O2) of the Opposition function that explains the difference identified. The players are high-profile individuals who frequently appear on the newspapers front-page. In other words it is not so much the criticism of and challenges to the status quo we see, as the individual need for profiling. This phenomenon is to be expected in a team at a lower level of maturity consisting of self-confident members.

The purpose of this study was to illustrate that even top-performing teams may have quite different group constitutions. The level of maturity of such a team will always match their purpose. If we do not consider the specialized skills needed to practice a particular sport, there is no reason to believe that the higher maturity of the project team would make them better suited to perform a similar purpose, quite the contrary. There is no such thing as a "best" role constitution or a "best" role structure to suit all purposes.

Group development

The second analysis concerned a group's ability to learn and increase the awareness of group dynamics and development. One assumption is that groups at a high level of maturity ought to be able to change their group constitution.

Concerning the student groups, we can see from Table 5 that there are only minor changes in group constitution from the start and after five months of working together. None of these differences are statistically significant. The familiar task of project work within the safe environment of a university campus does not seem to be sufficient to provoke any development.

If too much familiarity is the reason for the observed lack of change, we can expect a different course of development in groups under more pressure and in unfamiliar settings. This is exactly the situation for the groups of naval cadets. During the first year at the academy the cadets are exposed to maneuvers characterized by considerable levels of physical and psychological stress. Each such maneuver is followed by a solid debriefing. Looking at our findings (Table 5), we see a significant change in scores for the *Nurture* and *Dependence* and also for *Synergy* and

Dependence in one of the groups. For these groups the group constitution has changed, but not in all aspects as predicted.

The new generation of warfare, where international operations play an increasing role, demands that officers be able to decide and act independently in unfamiliar situations. At the naval academy the primary method to achieve this goal is to develop the team to a high level of maturity. The interdependence of team and individual growth is seen as the key means. This goal is not achieved concerning the NA1 teams, but to a higher extent in (NA2). The NA2 groups sailed across the Atlantic during wintertime. The cadets had no prior training in sailing such a vessel, and had to decide how to perform and learn from their failures. This chaotic situation exerted a heavy burden on the teams, and conflicts soon emerged. Sleeping in hammocks 50 cm from each other makes it very difficult to escape from unresolved conflicts. For these teams we see a significant improvement in all the group functions except Dependence. This kind of development is exactly what was predicted, and proved to be lasting.

The results discussed in this study illustrate difficulties in creating lasting change in groups and in increasing their level of maturity. Even if groups change their constitution during a challenging maneuver, they usually fall back to their prior patterns. However, ten weeks of trying to perform in complete chaos with no possibility of "escape" seems to work. When scrutinizing the student groups that really changed during the course of the program, it was obvious that they all had a tough start characterized by a rather 'high temperature'. Thus, high demands, challenges and ambiguity seem to be requisites for development.

Conclusion

Based on findings from a total of 39 groups we have discussed aspects of group constitution versus effectiveness and group development. Our findings support the assumption that group effectiveness is a matter of establishing a match between group constitution, the task and the context the group has to face. There is no such thing as an ideal mix of roles that match all situations. No teams follow the same track in their development. Attempts to change a team based on the assumption that all teams develop through the same fixed phases may result in a less able team. To create lasting changes in teams demands significant effort and there will always be a question of whether team-building is worth the effort it takes.

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