

ComS 5 Group Communication Study

Introduction

Groups are usually formed to draw upon the joint expertise, memory, intelligence, and creativity of people in order to solve difficult tasks. Often the problems faced are "ill-formed" meaning that the group has little to go on to respond to the problem and must work their way through it using the resources they bring and can muster.

You will experience group communication in this part of the course, learn to observe behavior, learn to analyze it, and explain it.

Goals:

To engage in purposeful group problem-solving

To observe communication behaviors generated by the group problem-solving context

To analyze patterns of group member's communication

To construct a body of knowledge about group communication processes

Here are the problems your group needs to solve:

Problem 1

Create a concept map of Chapter 10, Group Communication, (Hahn, Lippert and Payton, *Survey of Communication Study*) using CMapTools or CoSketch (see instructions below)

Problem 2

Find **gaps** (important topics about group communication that these authors missed compared to other writers) in the authors' presentation and do some research to fill in the gaps and elaborate our understanding of group communication. Hahn, Lippert and Payton miss important research and information regarding the nature of and use of "cohesiveness" by groups; they also skirt the interaction of social needs and task demands; there are lots of others, too, which you can discover in your research. You need to do sufficient research to figure out what some of those might be (BTW, I don't have a magic list in my head and you have to guess what it is; there are a great number of possible contributions you can make to the content of this chapter.)

Problem 3

Collect data on your group from at least two points in the group's history—at the beginning and near the end, minimally. Using SYMLOG (http://www.indiana.edu/~socpsy/public_files/SYMLOG/FRAME.htm) your group will create "field diagrams" of your groups' relationships generated from your communication behavior toward each other using the "Behaviors in group"

questionnaires. Find a way to save and share the field diagrams in both Word and PowerPoint applications. Before you can do that, you'll need to understand SYMLOG. I'll provide some information that you'll need to make sure you understand.

Problem 4

As a group, determine a body of content (theory, communication skills, methods of intervening in group development, etc.) you have learned about working in groups from your experience so far. Figure out what you think is significant enough, relevant enough and coherent enough to present to the class—this new information used to explain your experience here and in other task groups will become the content of your group's presentation. (You will not regurgitate the chapter content, but will present NEW ideas ("fill in the gaps") that will improve our understanding of task groups as communication phenomena.

Problem 5

Create a well-organized group presentation to teach the class the new knowledge you have created about groups by working through the problems 1-5 which your group confronted. One stipulation--all members of the group must participate equally in the presentation.

Your group will create a 20 minute presentation for the class. (See the grading rubric below).

Resources

CMapTools Download site

<http://cmap.ihmc.us/download/>

Register, submit and download the version you need.

If you use a PC, I recommend [IHMC CmapTools v5.03 for Windows](#)

If you use a Mac, I recommend [IHMC CmapTools v5.03 for Mac OS X](#)

When using CMap Tools, each member of your group who will be contributing to the Chapter 10 map must install the software so you can collaborate on the map.

This is essential so I can ultimately see what you designed. It is also essential because the technological dimension is a "problem" you'll need to deal with as a group. Figuring out how to use the software will be a problem for you as well.

An alternative mapping application is CoSketch (<http://cosketch.com>)

CoSketch does not require installing an application, but offers other problems for figuring out how to share the map project with group members.

Finally, you may use Prezi, if you wish, to create concept maps of Chapter 10. Prezi can be edited in a shared fashion, too. Go to: <http://prezi.com/>

As you work in the part of the project called "Mapping Chapter 10", observe the behavior of your group members—who they talk to, how much they talk to each other, what they talk about, the way they talk and the apparent intent of their talk.

Your observations will be essential to your second problem which will be creating a SYMLOG analysis of your group's development.

SYMLOG Field Diagrams

Go to http://www.indiana.edu/~socpsy/public_files/SYMLOG/FRAME.htm

And, if you wish to use it, a downloadable "Group Simulator":

<http://www.indiana.edu/~socpsy/ACT/SmallGroups/GroupSimulator.html>

Using the Behaviors in groups questionnaire, create a field diagram for your whole group after you attempt to map Chapter 10. (Do after completing Problem 1 so you'll have some real interaction to rate.). At minimum, do a second analysis after Problem 4 (deciding on what you learned).

Find a way to save and share the field diagrams in both Word and PowerPoint applications. This is important so you can show the class how the group developed and explain the effects of observed communication patterns on the members and the groups' outcomes. This will be important for your presentation.

Create a handout as a "residue" for your classmates that will help them remember the significant ideas and concepts of your presentation. Your handout should name your topic and name the group members. Here are some possible content elements:

- New communication terms defined
- Graphics, charts, tables, etc. that enhance understanding of your material visually (e.g. your original chapter concept map and your new one highlighting the new chunk of content you are presenting)
- Outline of content
- Bibliography of sources
- Links to relevant material
- Questions for the audience to consider
- Ideas for immediate application of the content you present
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[Be sure to edit your handout for factual errors, as well as mistakes on spelling, syntax or use of APA style in References.]

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Dr. Mark Stoner
Feedback on Group Member's Participation

Directions: This is your opportunity to provide me feedback on your colleagues' level of participation in the group activity. I will take this feedback as advice on any adjustments I need to make on member's individual grade for the project. I will look for patterns of similar response across the group, so, for example, only one negative voice will not be sufficient to trigger a significant adjustment in a colleague's grade.

The information will be confidential so that if a group member complains, I will not divulge identities, but I will share the ratings and comments anonymously with that person. It is important that you are honest, direct and fair and as detailed as you can be in your assessments of colleagues' behavior. **Evaluate behaviors; don't evaluate personalities** (1 is low; 5 is high).

Your name:

Group members' names:	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Was present at meetings (in and out of class or online)					Was engaged in solving the group's problems					Was willing to take responsibility for tasks beyond meeting times					Overall, contribution to the group's outcomes				

Add any necessary comments here and on back:

Group Presentation Rubric
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Criteria	Very Poor 1	Poor 2	Acceptable 3	Good 4	Excellent 5
Introduction A	No introduction used	Underdeveloped and /or irrelevant opening statement	Minimal audience engagement evident	Audience engagement; positive response to opening statement / relevant joke	High audience involvement; <u>original, appropriate, and intelligent</u> introduction; got attention and set topic for the presentation
Theme of presentation B	No main theme evident	Theme mentioned, and dropped or repeated but unclear throughout presentation	Generally clear articulation of the theme but explanation of how main ideas relate to it is not fully developed	Clear topical focus and central issues were laid out in the presentation; relation of ideas was discussed, but lacked direct connection to course content	Clear topical focus and <u>central</u> issues were laid out in the presentation; <u>all properly connected to course concepts</u>
Support Mat'l C	No supporting material used; nothing mentioned beyond presenters' own experience	Material is general, unspecific and not always relevant to the presentation; sometimes inappropriate	Relevant information was mentioned but not clearly used to make specific points or arguments	Logical, relevant, and credible; examples were used; sometimes effectively, sometimes not.	<u>Superior display of supporting material well integrated into the presentation</u>
Transitions D	No transitions used between main ideas	Inconsistent use of transitions attempted only between the main points	Generally consistent and helpful transitions between main points; several subtopics vaguely connected	Clear overall organizational structure reinforced by consistent and effective transitions; treated subtopics in a logical order	Smooth and natural transitions from one topic to another; the <u>presentation was coherent and logical</u> with artistic transitions at all logical levels
Vocal Delivery E	Unintelligible speaking style; Very difficult to hear and understand	Some inappropriate and/or ineffective articulation or insufficient volume	Generally clear delivery; minor articulation problems, such as, but not limited to, slurring or running words together or too fast a pace.	Effective articulation and volume level; easy to hear and understand all presenters	Fluid, well-articulated, and volume-appropriate delivery throughout; <u>excellent integration of presenters; clearly practiced</u>
Effective Language F	Words or sentences are often not understandable; offensive language used	Muddled meanings; distracting sentence structure or word usage inaccurate or inappropriate	Generally correct language; only an occasional sentence structure or grammatical error (≤ 3 such errors)	Clear, specific word choices and expressions; no grammatical errors	Clear and distinctive words, expressions, and sentence structures; terms from the course are <u>properly and effectively used in explanations</u>
Conclusion G	No conclusion	Abrupt, ending without connection to subject	Acceptable work; additional development needed	Satisfying review of highlights	<u>Outstanding topics review; strong sense of closure; point of the presentation was emphasized</u>