Group processes

Kelly G. Shaver
College of Charleston
shaverk@cofc.edu
www.cofc.edu/~shaverk
Social facilitation

- Presence of others increases arousal
- Arousal facilitates dominant response
- So effect depends on task:
  - Simple, well learned responses improve
  - Complex or difficult behaviors suffer
- But not always facilitative
  - Evaluation apprehension
  - Distraction-conflict in attention
Social loafing

- Reduction in individual output on a group-based task
- Can be reduced if
  - Task is meaningful to participants
  - Individual effort can be identified
  - Group is small and/or cohesive
  - Punishment will follow failure
Group effects combined

- **On easy tasks**
  - Identity produces facilitation, better
  - Collective produces loafing, worse

- **On difficult tasks**
  - Identity produces pressure, worse
  - Collective produces better performance through “security”
Deindividuation

- Extreme of collective
  - Lack of individual accountability
  - Attention focused outward (no OSA)
  - Result is to take on the characteristics of the collective (which in rare instances may become positive)

- So the question is, should course evaluations be done on line?
Joining a group

- Forget the “orming”
- Individual/group transition points
  - Investigation followed by entry
  - Socialization followed by acceptance
  - Maintenance (unless there is divergence)
  - If resocialization fails, there is exit
Rules and results

- **Roles:** behaviors expected by the group
- **Norms:** rules of conduct that often apply to most roles held by members
- **Cohesiveness**
  - Proportion of “in” choices to “out” choices
  - Success increases cohesiveness, especially in smaller size groups
  - Cheer for the whistleblowers
“Group mind” at its worst

- Polarization of opinion
  - Persuasive arguments
  - Social comparison and categorization

- Groupthink
  - Cohesive groups of similar people under stress
  - Illusions of unanimity and invulnerability
  - Mindguards, intolerance of dissent
Reducing groupthink

- Consult with outsiders
- Have leader speak last
- Encourage all to contribute (better if anonymously)
- Focus on the ideas, not the people
- Appoint a “devil’s advocate”
- Encourage counterfactual thinking
Group performance

- **Type of task**
  - Additive: sum of group effort
  - Conjunctive: the weakest link
  - Disjunctive: the strongest link

- **Performance by a group**
  - Better on additive or disjunctive
  - Unless there is “process loss” from problems in interaction
Truth in brainstorming

- Nominal groups of individuals are actually better than co-acting groups
- Some of the reasons
  - Production blocking (cannot all talk at once)
  - Free riding (good old social loafing)
  - Evaluation apprehension
  - Performance matching (if *that* is good enough, then I can say …)
Other performance problems

- Biased sampling (incomplete sharing of information assumed known by all)
- Directives from the hierarchy lead to unfortunate “filtering”
- Escalation of commitment
- Diversity in membership
  - Can broaden alternatives
  - But can inhibit free communication
Social dilemmas

- Self-interested choices are worst for the collective
- Prisoner’s dilemma and bargaining
- Resource dilemmas
  - Commons dilemma (extraction)
  - Public good dilemma (contributions)
Prisoner’s dilemma

P > Q > R > S

Person A

Cooperate

Compete

Person B

Cooperate

Compete

Cooperate

Compete

P > Q > R > S

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Factors and strategies

- Presence of communication
- Repeated plays
- Relative sizes of payoffs
- End-game
- Tit-for-tat
- Win-stay-lose-change
Solving social dilemmas

- **Structural factors**
  - Change the payoff structure
  - Put some authority in charge

- **Psychosocial factors**
  - Collectivist culture
  - Trust and cooperative attitude
  - Past experience or future expectations of cooperation
Conflict escalation

- If coercive means are there, people use them
- Competition produces polarization
- Internal cohesiveness and attendant tendencies toward groupthink
- Hostility produces dehumanization, which justifies hostility
Reducing conflict

- GRIT: graduated, reciprocated, initiatives in tension-reduction
- Integrative bargaining – win/win
- Negotiation improves if you are both flexible and strong
- Arbitration
- Mediation