What is a ….

College Classroom as Group

A collection of individuals who have regular contact and frequent interaction, mutual influence, common feeling of camaraderie, and who work together to achieve a common set of goals.

http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/group.html#ixzz3oayFg0Vx
**Group Learning**

- More of a brain friendly instruction
- More brains engaged
- Verbalizing ideas so retention is increased
- Processes content moves from short-term to long-term memory
- More emotion evoked + increased learning
- Actively constructing meaning

**Need for 21st Century Skills**
- Thinking and evaluating many possible answers not just one
- Taking turns, showing respect
- Acquiring diversity skills
- More active in process of learning


**Benefits of Learning in Groups**

- Instruction shifts from teacher-centered and content-centered to learner-centered and learning process driven

- Students become active participants, engaged learner and active agent in the learning process

- Teacher becomes a facilitator and mediator of the learning process

**Creating a Classroom Environment Conducive to Group Learning**

- Openness
- Understanding
- Value members
- Acceptance
- Trust
- Caring
Key Attributes of Effective Groups

- **Collective** perceptions
- **Needs of both** individual and group are recognized
- **Shared** aims
- **Interdependence** of relationship between member and individual contributions
- **Social organization** based on **agreed rules** and power relationships
- **Interaction** throughout the group process
- **Cohesiveness** of **joint desire** to continue and contribute
- **Membership** is defined by **group relationships**

Jackson et al. (2014). Small group learning: Graduate health students’ views of challenges and benefits. Contemporary Nurse, 48(1), 117-128

Successful Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Openness</th>
<th>Roles and Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear <strong>Shared</strong></td>
<td>Excellent communication</td>
<td>Right people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular checking in</td>
<td>Mutual respect</td>
<td>Right skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on “what’s important now”</td>
<td>Safe environment</td>
<td>Awareness of each other’s roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate successes</td>
<td>Leaderful</td>
<td>Necessary tools and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>are provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bannister, S., Wickenheiser, H.M., Kin, B., & Kegan, D.A. (2013). Key Elements of Highly Effective Teams. Downloaded from pediatrics.aappublications.org

The Class as a Group

- **Forming a cohesive group**
- **Group formation theory**
  - Successive-stage models
  - Cyclical models
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Tuckman’s Five Stages of Development</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Forming: The Orientation Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Storming: The Conflict Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Structure: The Norming Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Performance: The Performing Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dissolution: The Adjourning Stage</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Forming: The Orientation Stage</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Major Processes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Familiar with each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dependency and inclusion issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Acceptance of leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Group consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Characteristics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Communications are tentative, polite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Concern for ambiguity, groups goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher is active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students compliant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
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<th><strong>Storming: The Conflict Stage</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Major Processes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Disagreements over procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expression of dissatisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tension among students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Antagonism toward teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Characteristics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Criticism of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Poor attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hostility</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Polarization and coalition formation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Structure: The Norming Stage**

- Major Processes
  - Growth of cohesive and unity
  - Establishments of roles, standards and relationships
  - Increased trust, communication
- Characteristics
  - Agreement of procedures
  - Reductions in role ambiguity
  - Increased “we-feeling”

**Performance: The Performing (Work) Stage**

- Major Processes
  - Goal achievement
  - High task-orientation
  - Emphasis on performance and production
- Characteristics
  - Decision making
  - Problem solving
  - Mutual cooperation

**Dissolution: Adjourning**

- Major Processes
  - Termination of roles
  - Completion of tasks
  - Reduction of dependency
- Characteristics
  - Disintegration and withdrawal
  - Increased independence and emotionality
  - Regret
Characteristics of Effective Classrooms

- Confident in Teacher
- Concern for/by students; supportive
- Has clear and shared goals
- Group and individual goals are compatible
- Has high goals—but achievable
- Uses the resources of all students
- Students are involved
- Has decision-making skills
- Has problem solving skills
- Deals openly with conflict
- Has a sense of priorities
- Has open, frank and honest communication
- Students are able to influence each other
- Willing to evaluate results and processes

“One of the reasons for studying group dynamics is to find ways of giving every individual in the group an opportunity to contribute to the maximum extent of his ability toward the solution of a particular problem.”


Applying Group Interaction Principles

1. Everyone is responsible for the outcome of the group interaction.
2. The effectiveness of a group depends on the quality of the feedback contained in the interaction.
3. Group solutions and insight profit from multiple ideas and input.
4. When people feel “safe” they participate more.
5. Trust and participation levels increase if they feel are "all in the same boat".
6. Groups function in 2 fundamental areas, task and socio-emotional. More effective if there is a balance between the two.
7. Natural leaders may emerge and may function positively or negatively in both function areas.
8. The leader/teacher serves as a model for that group.
9. Trust increases when participation is more distributed and as personal knowledge and contact increase trust level improves.
10. Use informal, non-purposive conversation to reduce fear of interaction.
11. Beginnings are important, use ice-breakers early to generate higher participation levels.
12. A group will set its own norms of behavior and will expect conformity and may extend to the professor.
13. Attention to nonverbal cues is important for receiving and interpreting communication.
14. All groups need a sense of closure both in task and socio-emotional areas. Termination rituals are important for the continuity of the experience.
15. Subgroups will form efforts made to cut across groups to the class-wide level is important.


How to be Successful

- Plan for each stage of group work
- Explain to your students how the groups will operate and how students will be graded
- Help students develop skills to be successful
  - Problem Solving
  - Conflict Resolution
- Create tasks that are interdependent
- Decide how groups will be formed
- Help groups plan how to proceed
- Give advice on how to make group decisions
- Regularly check in with groups
- Minimize student resistance to group work

Ice-Breaker Idea

Psychogeomtric Theory by Dellinger

- Have each person choose the shape that best represents themselves.
- Have them get in groups of 5 (1 of each shape) and discuss their traits and what their strengths and weakness are as a group.
- All though we are all different there are similarities.
- Squares- organized, structured, rigid, task-oriented, concrete, no ideas- all “do”
- Circles- People lovers caring, nurturing, harmonious
- Rectangles- leaders- make decisions, work well with squares, take charge, delegate, may be ruthless in their leadership styles and management methods
- “Squiggly” line- Creative, relaxed, idea people- little work, few results

More Ice Breaker Ideas

- http://www.lcc.edu/cte/resources/teachingettes/icebreakers.aspx
- https://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf
- http://icebreakerideas.com/quick-icebreakers/
Idea for Identifying Group Goals

Introduction: if a group does not know where it is going, any road will move it but it may not lead to where they want to go.

Hand out three different colors 3x5 cards to each class member. Have them answer the following questions 1 on each card. No names.

1. Why did you take this class? (pink card)
2. What do you personally hope to gain from participating in this course? (blue card)
3. What do you believe to be the goal or goals of the class? (yellow card)

Collect all the cards and stack by color. Then divide class into groups and hand then 1 stack (or part of stack if large group) and have them compile a composite list and then discuss as a whole class.

Questions to Ask While Planning (Shibley)

- Type of group
  - Formal or informal
    - Meet with same group or changes throughout semester
- Composition
  - 2: pair and share, interviews, editing
  - 3 or 4: editing, group project
  - >5: brainstorming, role playing
- Grading
  - Informal: low-stakes, pass/fail or low points if any
  - Formal: clear rubric, peer assessment
- How form groups
  - Random
  - Assigned

Group Work Decision Tree (Shibley)
Group Work in the Classroom

- **Five Essential Components**
  (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1994)
  - Students need to believe they can succeed by working together
  - Encourage students to help each other
  - Students must know they will be held accountable
  - Students need to learn how to communicate and cooperate
  - The whole group needs time to reflect on processing

Strategies for Forming Groups (Silberman, 1996)

- **Grouping Cards:**
  - Color code cards based on the number of groups you want

- **Puzzles**
  - Get as many large piece puzzles (based on how many you want in a group), mix them up and give everyone a piece as they walk in and then have them find the group they go with.

- **Finding famous fictional friends for families**
  - Create a list of fictional family (Peter pan, tinker bell, etc.) write each name on a card and hand out to students. Have them find their family.

- **Name tags**
  - Different colors shapes to form groups

- **Birthdays**
  - Have students group by month of birth (single month or group months together depending on number of groups needed)

Strategies for Forming Groups

- **Playing cards**
  - Use a deck of cards and either group by number or use type of card and divide into hearts etc.

- **Draw numbers**
  - Have slips of papers (# with 1 written, etc. depending on size and number of groups). Put in box and have students pick one

- **Candy favors**
  - Have different kinds of candy with each representing a group.

- **Choose like items**
  - Select toys on a common theme and use them to indicate teams

- **Student materials**
  - If you have handouts code them with a colored sticker or paper clip. Group by color. Even copy on different color of paper
Ideas to Encourage Participation

- Pose open-ended questions, don’t be afraid of silence
- Allow all students to express their views
- Explain incorrect answers in a way that does not put down the student
- Use problem-solving exercises
- Examine critical/current/applicable issues
- Engage by using active learning
- Inform the group with relevant information but focus on the learner not the content
- Discuss application of information

Conclusion

“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.”
~Henry Ford

T - TOGETHER
E - EVERYONE
A - ACHIEVES
M - MORE