Group Dynamics 101

Institute for Transforming Undergraduate Education

University of Delaware

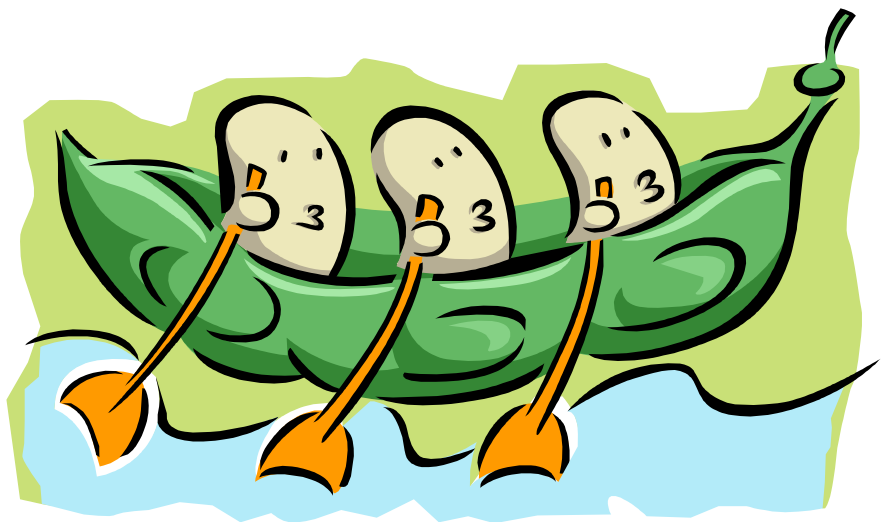
PBL2002: A Pathway to Better Learning

June 16-20, 2002

Session Objective

To explore and discuss strategies an instructor can use to maintain functional groups in the classroom

Not searching for peas in a pod



Collaborative Learning

Informal

Short term
Impermanent
Ad hoc

Examples:
Think-Pair-Share
Minute papers
Concept testing

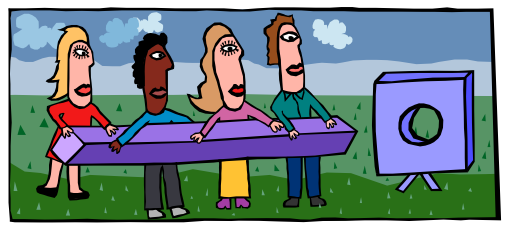
Formal

Longer activities
Permanent groups
Instructor assigned

Examples:
Jigsaw groups
Presentations, debates
Problem-, project-based learning

Five Elements of Cooperative Learning

- **Positive interdependence**
- **Individual accountability**
- **Promotive interaction (face-to-face)**
- **Use of teamwork skills**
- **Group processing**



Johnson, Johnson & Smith. "Maximizing Instruction Through Cooperative Learning." AAHE Prism. Feb. 1998

Why Use Groups?

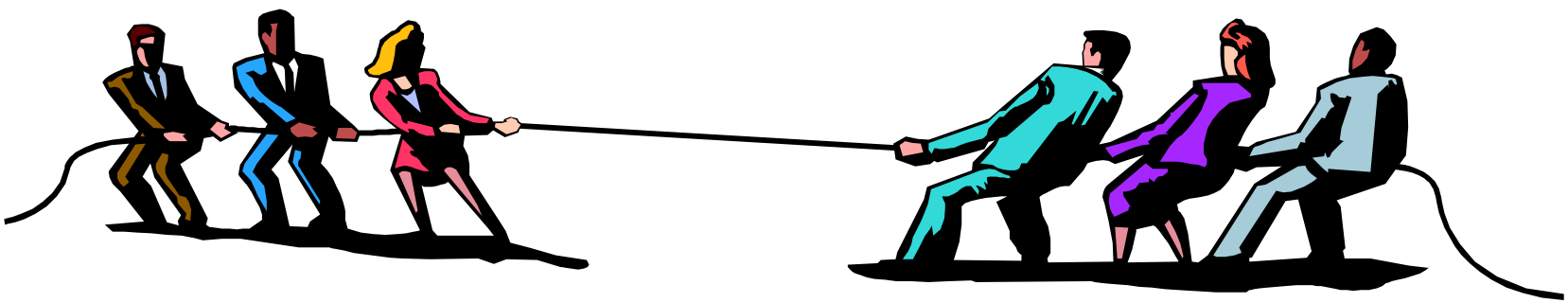
- **Committed to it based on research and observation***
- **Simulates the "real world" - use of teams**
- **High motivation when actively involved**
- **Learn more fully and with less effort**
- **Learn in context**

**Springer, Stanne, & Donovan. 1999. Review of Educational Research 69:21-52.*

The Top 5 Ways to Wreck a Group

List 5 behaviors or actions that can undermine good group function

Report out in 5 minutes



Questions to Consider

- **What if anything is wrong with this group?**
- **What could be done to help this group work better?**
- **Could this situation have been prevented?**

Videotape Credits

Author:
"Dawn's Eight O'Clock" – Harold White

Director:
Nancy King

Producers:
Deborah Allen and Harold White

Student Actors:
Melissa Reddish, Michelle Lyons, Eric Moskal, Crystal Mack, Amanda Simons

Suggestions for Using Groups

- **Set the stage early**
- **Form heterogeneous groups**
- **Use permanent groups**
- **Rotate roles of responsibility**
- **Rely on group-selected ground rules**
- **Conduct peer evaluations**

Suggestions for Getting Started

- **Explain why learning in groups is a good strategy.**
- **Ask students to report on past experiences.**
- **Talk about support mechanisms.**
- **Use group warm-up activities.**

Forming Groups

Randomly heterogeneous -
"counting off" :

- **from roster**
- **in class**

Intentionally heterogeneous, based on information:

- **from student records**
- **supplied by students**

Forming Heterogeneous Groups Without Information

If you are in Math, Phys. Sci, or Engineering, add 25	(25)
If you are in Biological or Health Sciences add 50	-
If you are in Business or Economics, add 75	-
If you are in Humanities, Soc. Sci. or Educ., add 100	-
If you are Male, add 100	-
If you are Female, add 200	(200)
Sum the digits of your Social Security Number	(39)
Sum the seven digits of your office Phone Number	(42)
GRAND TOTAL (Your Number)	(306)

Rotating Roles

Discussion Leader
Keeps group on track; maintains full participation

Recorder
Records assignments, strategies, unresolved issues, data; convenes group outside of class

Reporter
Reports out during whole class discussion; writes up final draft of assignments

Accuracy Coach
Checks group understanding; finds resources

Examples of Ground Rules

Come to class on time every day

Come to class having done the assignment and prepared to discuss it

Must notify members of the group ahead of time if must miss class for any reason

Be willing to share information

Respect the views, values, and ideas of other members of the group

If members of the group violate these ground rules, other members of the group may impose the following consequences:

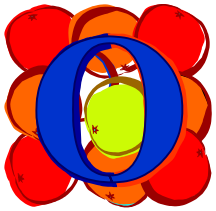
Peer Evaluation

Some general suggestions:

- **Use predetermined written criteria that focus primarily on behaviors**
- **Do at least 2X per semester**
- **Factor results into students' grades**
- **Summarize results and distribute summaries**
- **Keep the process simple**
- **Incorporate into group assignments**

Using Groups in Larger Classes, with Inexperienced Students

- **Use well-defined activities with clearly stated objectives.**
- **Bring the class together for discussion and/or clarification at frequent intervals.**
- **Plan both group and individual assignments.**
- **Look for signs of behaviors that undermine group function.**
- **Use peer group facilitators.**

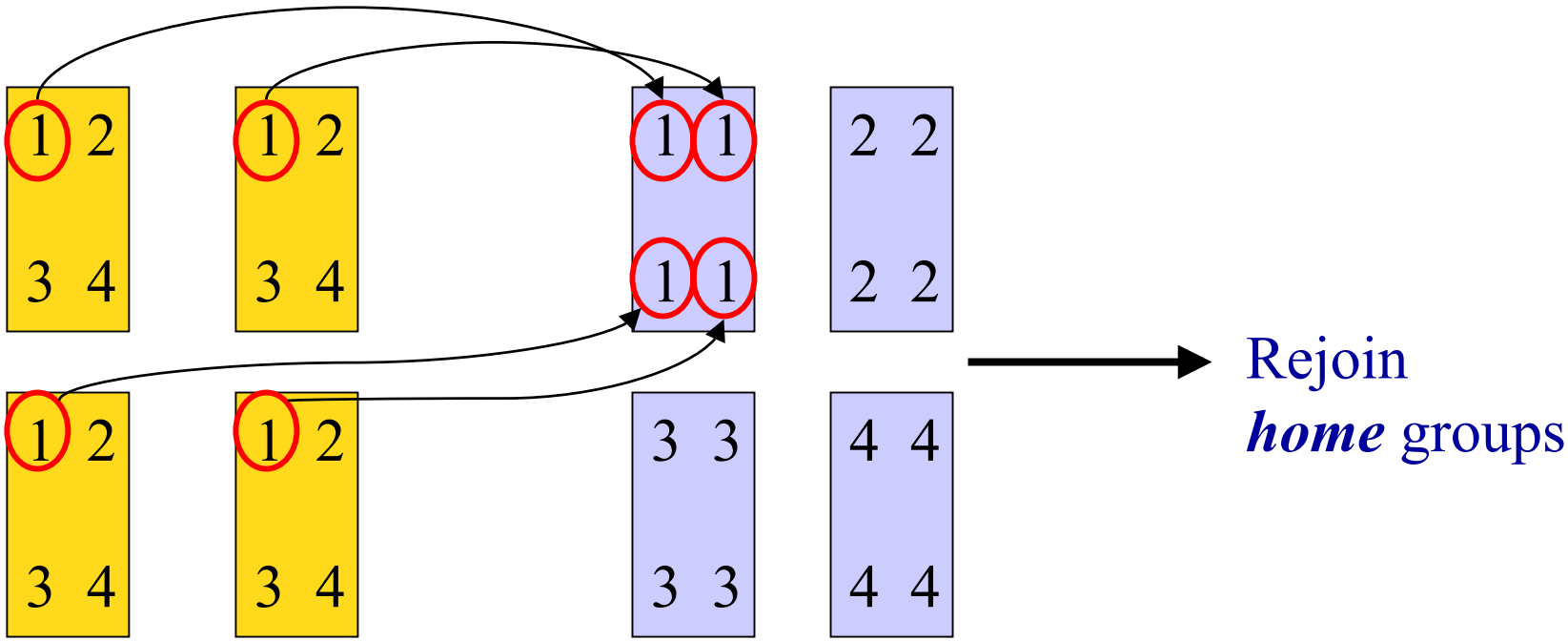


nce upon a time...

A team of students had four members called Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done. Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

- Graham Gibbs, "Learning in Teams"

Jigsaw Group Scheme



4 ***home*** groups,
with 4 members each

4 new ***expert*** groups, with one representative from each ***home*** group

(Aronson et al. 1978. *The Jigsaw Classroom.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.)