

Groups 101: Working Effectively with Groups in PBL

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Courtesy of Hal White and Deb Allen



What Is PBL?

“The principal idea behind PBL is that the starting point for learning should be a problem, a query, or a puzzle that the learner wishes to solve.”

Boud, D. (1985) PBL in perspective. In “PBL in Education for the Professions,” D. J. Boud (ed); p. 13.

Characteristics Needed in College Graduates



**Excellent
communication skills**

**Ability to define problems,
gather and evaluate
information, develop solutions**

**Address problems
in a complex real-world setting**

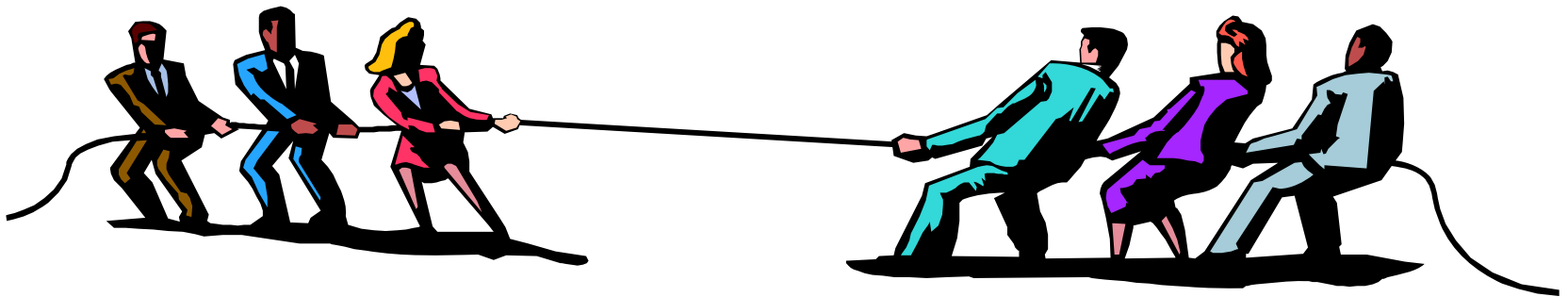
**Team skills –
ability to work with others**



The Top 5 Ways to Wreck a Group

List 5 behaviors or actions that can undermine good group function.

Report out in 5 minutes.





The Top 5 Ways to Wreck a Group

Responses from small group work:

- Lack of leadership
- Dictatorial, domination
- Intolerance of different opinions
- Avoiding/ignoring conflicts
- Isolation of individuals within group
- Absence/misunderstanding of goals
- Overly concerned with small things
- Goals are not clear
- Division of tasks
- Loyalty, relationships within group
- Compromise, commitment
- Different goals of members of group



Video Clip

<http://www.udel.edu/pbl/groups-in-action/mpegs/dawn.mpg>

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?



Suggestions for Using Groups

Form heterogeneous groups.

Use permanent groups for semester.

Rotate roles of responsibility.

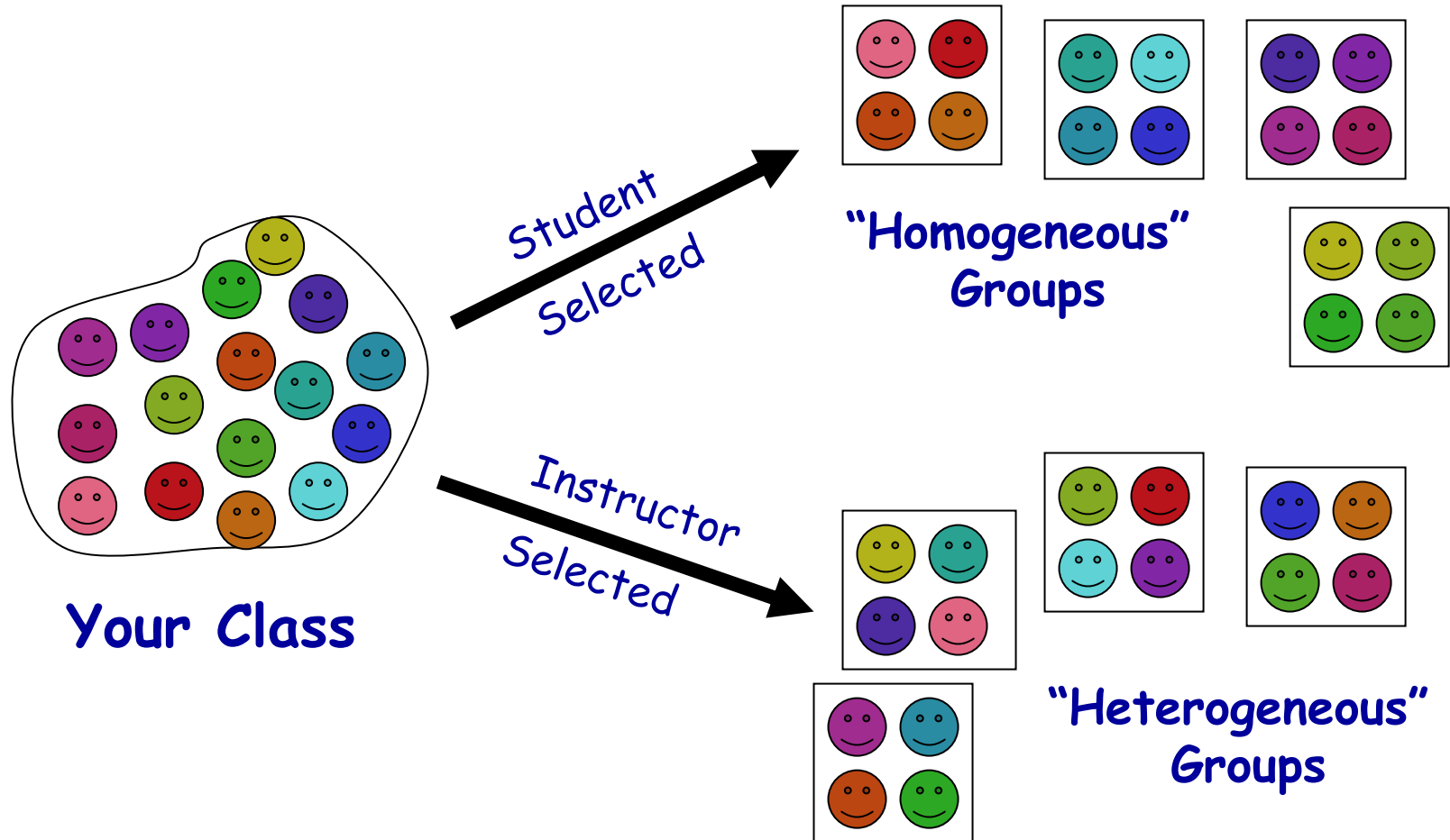
Rely on group-selected ground rules.

Conduct peer evaluations.



Forming Groups

Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous





What Aspects of Heterogeneity are Important for You?

Skills?

Age?

Major?

Gender?

Schedule?

Learning Style?

Ethnicity?

Academic Record?



Roles of Responsibility

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



Sample 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 2 times per semester.

Factor results into students' grades?

Summarize results and distribute summaries.

Keep the process simple.

Incorporate into group assignments.