FALL 2020
ODKM 705: Group Dynamics and Team Learning
Fridays 5:00 – 10:00 P.M. and Saturdays 9:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
Friday, August 14; Saturday, August 15; Friday, August 21; Friday, August 28; Friday, September 11; Saturday, September 12, & Saturday, September 19.

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In the popular book *Emotional Intelligence* Daniel Goleman (1995) states that interpersonal skills are far more important to success in organizations than previously believed: “At best, IQ contributes about 20 percent to the factors that determine life success, which leaves 80 percent to other forces” (p.34). You might have heard stories of exceptionally talented engineers and managers whose careers were stymied because of their perceived inability to work with others. Significant evidence exists to suggest that your impact in organizations depends partly on your ability to get along with others.

The “soft skills” have long been undervalued in management education until the late 1980s when a landmark report on the topic\(^1\) called for a radical redesign of executive education emphasizing people management competencies. Since then business schools have redesigned their curriculum focusing on people management skills. The ability to work productively in small groups is now seen as a critical competence for achieving organizational effectiveness. Examples of small groups are top management, board of directors, product development teams, cross-teams, and in general, a relatively permanent group comprising about six to twelve members. Small group interactions have dynamics of their own and knowledge of them should improve your ability to function effectively in such contexts.

*Group Dynamics and Team Learning* provides an understanding of group dynamics inherent in small group interaction. In unstructured and structured learning environments you will experience intense group interactions to learn from one another. You will get plenty of opportunities to reflect upon your learning and communication styles and the impact they may

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have on others. The course will also explore various aspects of group dynamics such as Appreciative Intelligence, conflict, power, perception, motivation, leadership, and decision-making. As in a laboratory, you can experiment with and experience the relevance of several concepts related to group dynamics. The goal is to acquire a better judgment, understanding, and competence to be better facilitators of your own and others’ learning in a variety of group situations.

Learning process
A student-centered approach is created where you assume responsibility for your learning. Participation is necessary and desired. Explorations of the subject matter in this course may generate a fair amount of ambiguity. Uncertainty or ambiguity reduction is a social process most often accomplished by interpreting or talking about them. When it comes to group dynamics, your classroom is a place to generate that dialogue. It is an opportunity to be innovative and bold about creating actionable knowledge of group and organizational dynamics.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

1. **Book Review & Critique**
You will review a book dealing with group dynamics or small groups and write a critique articulating the impact the ideas and approaches in it might have had on your thinking about the subject matter. A list of suggested books is attached. If you want to pick one outside of this list, you must get approval from the professor regarding its appropriateness before you start working on it.

   **Grading criteria:** The review should be divided into two segments. The first should be a summary of the book (5-6 pages, 8 grade points) where you will articulate the core ideas of the author(s). Do not include any critique in this segment; that will be the next section. Do not provide chapter by chapter summary. Instead, write a narrative that is holistic. Keep quotes to the minimum and short.

   The second segment should be your critique of the core ideas, arguments, or themes of the book (5-6 pages, 7 grade points). There are two parts to your critique. The first is called conceptual critique. Consider showing the logical consistencies and inconsistencies regarding the core arguments. What are your agreements and disagreements with the author(s)? The second part is called personal reactions. Consider bringing examples from your personal or professional life to support or question the core arguments of the book. Be mindful not to bring any parts of the summary (which you have already written for the first segment) into the critique segment.

   Please read the checklist at the end of this syllabus before you start working on the assignment. You are welcome to read other books and cite them for the critique, if necessary. Your writing style should be academic and scholarly rather than casual or colloquial. Use APA style only.

**Due: Thursday, August 27, 8:00 PM by email to thatchen@gmu.edu and your facilitator**
2. **Personal Reflection and Application Essay (PRAE)**

Based on your experience of the group dynamics as well as readings and concepts discussed in class, you will submit an analysis known as *PRAE*. A Personal Reflection and Application Essay (PRAE) is an assignment that integrates theory and practice. Following Kolb’s (1984) *experiential learning cycle*, a PRAE will have four components: *concrete experience* (CE), *reflective observation* (RO), *abstract conceptualization* (AC), and *active experimentation* (AE). The CE is a detailed description of your experiences during the class and small group interaction. In RO, you will reflect on the experience from different perspectives. AC is the place to conceptualize the experience based on the research findings or theories listed in the three textbooks. AE is your opportunity to suggest what you might do differently in a similar situation in the future. In short, you will not only describe and reflect on your experiences, but also explain and make sense of them in order to experiment with new learning and action plans.

The PRAE should be about 25 double-spaced pages (30 pages maximum). Detailed guidelines and samples for writing the PRAE will be given in class. Please read the PRAE checklist at the end of this syllabus before you start working on the assignment. The checklist should be self-scored and attached to your assignment. The citations in your PRAE should not have been used in any of your previous PRAE or any other assignment in GMU or ODKM courses.

**Due: Monday, October 5, 8:00 P.M. by email to thatchen@gmu.edu and your facilitator**

3. **Attendance and Participation**

Experiential learning requires that class participants form into a learning community and be actively involved throughout the course. You should be willing to engage with one another because of a conviction that learning is ultimately a social process. You will also feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for managing your own learning while facilitating others’. For this reason, full attendance in all classes is required. According to ODKM policy you cannot miss more than one class and still receive a passing credit for the course.

Because of the condensed nature of the class schedule and the experiential learning format of the course, missing sessions will negatively impact your ability to benefit from this course. In addition, you will be severely limited in your ability to write the PRAE assignment (60% of your grade) since it is based on your “here and now” experiences in class. You will lose grade points for coming late (including after breaks), or leaving early from class. You are expected to be in class five minutes before start time. Please remember that your small group sessions cannot start unless everyone is present.

You should take notes throughout this class. Audio or video recording of small group Zoom sessions is not permitted.
Evaluation:

1. Book review & critique 15%
2. Analysis of group experiences (PRAE) 60%
3. Attendance and participation 25%

The following scale will be used to determine your grade out of a total of 100 points.

98-100 = A+
93 –97.99 = A
90 - 92.99 = A-
86 - 89.99 = B+
83 - 85.99 = B
80 - 82.99 = B-
70 - 79.99 = C
Below 69.99 = F

Late submissions, in rare events, should be negotiated before due dates. If you are a student with a disability needing academic accommodations, please let the professor know and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS before the beginning of the class. Late submissions will be penalized.

GMU & Schar School policy on plagiarism
https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of education. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics. Plagiarism is the use of others’ words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of others’ work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources are essential while writing your assignments. The faculty of the Schar School of Policy & Government has adopted a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F” and may lead to failure for the course.

To help enforce the Schar School policy on plagiarism, your written work may be compared with electronic databases and submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student’s work to such services without prior permission from the student. The Schar School policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code. It is not intended to replace or substitute the GMU policy.

You must cite each time you reuse any of your own work indicating all previous uses you have made of the same work. Using the same citations (readings) from other assignments written
for any other professor should be acknowledged (Please see additional restrictions in the PRAE checklist).

**Required Texts**


**Course Outline**

**Recommended preparation before the beginning of class:**

2. You may also choose a book for the book review & critique assignment due on August 27 and start reading.
3. Thatchenkery & Metzker, Chapters 1-11
4. Forsyth, Chapters 1–2.
5. Complete the Learning Style Inventory (LSI) that has been sent to you and submit the results to Lauren Green at https://forms.gle/n7RHDqEj3fgW5jNK9 by Monday, August 10 (LSI is copyrighted and therefore you cannot use the scanned copy for any other purposes than learning about your own learning styles). On the first day of class, we will use the survey results to help us form small groups that have a diverse mix of styles.
   - Please make sure you score your answers correctly (i.e. a "4" is how you learn BEST and a "1" is how you learn least). In the past, a few students had scored them in reverse, so score yours carefully.
   - Make sure that only one of each number is being used for each question (i.e. you cannot say “4” two times for the same question).
   - Make sure that the numbers at the bottom add up to 120.
   - If you have any questions about the scoring process, please email Lauren Green (lauren@dancingwithmarkers.com).

**Session 1: Friday, August 14, 5:00 - 10:00 P.M.**

**Preparation**

Thatchenkery & Metzker, Chapters 1-11
Forsyth, Chapters 1 – 2
Agenda

Overview of the course
Managing expectations
The nature of group dynamics
Gaining expertise through experiential learning: Learning from the “here and now”
Small groups laboratory as a microcosm of the real world
Form small groups
Personal Board of Directors exercise

Homework

Review your Learning Style inventory and bring to class next day.

Session 2: Saturday, August 15, 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Preparation

Forsyth, Chapters 3-4

Agenda

Reflections on various group processes such as power, motivation, leadership, and communication
Developing skills to simultaneously participate as well as observe group processes
Analyses of different roles members are engaged in
Learning Style discussion (based on LSI results. Please bring your LSI profile to class)
Understanding the relation between learning styles and writing PRAEs
Conceptualizing the group dynamics class as an experiential learning cycle
Comparing influence process
Individual and group decision-making (Desert Survival Exercise)

Homework


Session 3: Friday, August 21, 5:00 - 10:00 P.M.

Preparation

Complete Style Matters Inventory
Forsyth chapters 5-6
Patterson et al chapters 1-5

Agenda
Understanding intrapersonal, interpersonal, and inter-group conflict
Conflict resolution and negotiation strategies
Conflict management exercise (Please bring your completed Style Matters
inventory to class)
Introduce “Enhancing Your Social Capital” exercise (Presentation &
Handout)

Homework
DUE: Book report Thursday, August 29, 8:00 PM by email to thatchen@gmu.edu
and your facilitator

Session 4: Friday, August 28, 5:00 - 10:00 P.M.

Agenda
Enhancing Your Social Capital exercise (must have finished pre-work handed out
on August 21)
Understanding the development and transmission of group norms
Role differentiation and role stress
Team development and team learning
Valuing diversity
Learning the art of giving and receiving feedback

Session 5: Friday, September 11, 5:00 - 10:00 P.M.

Preparation
Forsyth chapters 7, 8, & 12.
Patterson et al chapters 6-11.

Agenda
Understanding power dynamics in groups and organizations
Refining your capacity for simultaneous participation and observation of group
processes
Enhancing your Appreciative Intelligence: Ability to reframe and see the positive
Learning to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty
Double-loop learning/reflection (thinking about your thinking)
Using “what” questions (Are you getting good at this by now?)
Enhancing mindfulness
Issues of inclusion, intimacy, and influence in groups (Are you aware of these
while working in groups?)
PRAE clinic
Hand out Appreciative Feedback Exercise template

Session 6: Saturday, September 12, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Preparation
Forsyth: chapter 9-11

Must have started working on the Appreciative Feedback assignment for each student in your small group by now.

Agenda
“Visiting the other culture” or “group social capital” exercise
Continuing reflections on various group processes such as power, motivation, leadership, and communication
Practicing facilitation and coaching skills

Session 7: Saturday, September 19, 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Preparation: Complete Appreciative Feedback (using the format shared the week before) for everyone in your small group

Agenda
Consolidate learning from group dynamics and team learning class
Action plans
Appreciative Feedback Exercise
Course evaluation


1) Extent to which you have summarized the book (8 grade points, 5-6 double-spaced pages)

_____ have summarized the book thoroughly, covering every section, and devoting equal attention to all parts
_____ have summarized most sections very well, while not devoting the same attention to the rest
_____ have summarized some sections very well, while not devoting the same attention to the rest

2) Extent to which you have critiqued the core ideas in the book (conceptual, logical, or intellectual critique) (4 grade points, 3-4 double-spaced pages)

_____ have critiqued some ideas in the book
_____ have critiqued most ideas in the book
_____ have critiqued all ideas in the book

3) Extent to which you have used positive and negative critique

_____ used only positive critique
_____ used only negative critique
_____ used both positive and negative critique in a balanced proportion

4) Have you provided personal reactions to the core ideas or themes of the book (sharing how you have experienced them in your personal or professional life)? Yes/No (3 grade points, 2-3 double-spaced pages)

Do not to use too many quotes. In a book review, quotes are least necessary. Use APA style

Any comments you want to share with the facilitator /professor regarding your experience of writing this assignment?

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Your name: __________________________      Date Submitted: ___________________
Personal Reflection Application Essay (PRAE) checklist

Please circle appropriate choices and attach to your assignment. A PRAE submitted without the checklist will not be graded. Please note that once submitted this assignment is final and you cannot ask for a rewrite. Use only Word. No PDF files. APA style only.

Due: 8:00 PM, Monday, October 5 by email to thatchen@gmu.edu and your facilitator.

Your name: ____________________________  Date Submitted: ______________

Concrete Experience: (10 points, about 5 pages)

- Does the paper contain an objective, thorough description of what happened / is happening in my group? (Narrate what happened without your interpretations. The focus should be on data and not on analysis.)

  To a great extent  Somewhat  Only minimally

- Does the paper contain a subjective description of my feelings, perceptions and thoughts regarding what happened in my group? (Share what you felt during the event/experience. No justification or exploration of your feelings is needed at this stage)

  To a great extent  Somewhat  Only minimally

Common challenges:
1) Not writing about your feelings
2) Skipping important details
3) Writing too much about others and little about self
4) Not writing about both small group and large group sessions. You should write about key CEs such as BOD, LSI, group decision making exercise, conflict style, social capital, group social capital, and appreciative feedback activity.
5) Mixing CE with reflections, interpretations, or analysis
Reflective Observation: (12 points, about 5 pages)

- Did I look at the group experience(s) from different points view (multiple perspectives)? (In addition to listing your own views consider what other interpretations might be possible).

  To a great extent            Somewhat            Only minimally

- Did I reflect on key experiences such as BOD, LSI, group decision making exercise, conflict style, social capital, group social capital, and appreciative feedback activity?

  To a great extent            Somewhat            Only minimally

- Did I reflect on the role I had played and its impact on the outcomes of the group dynamics (for example, was I an active, passive, or hesitant member)? Did I reflect how my behavioral styles/participation might have contributed to the overall quality of the group experience? (Write about the impact of your actions before you write about others’ roles and actions. It is a requirement that you focus on your own actions and feelings before writing about what others should have done).

  To a great extent            Somewhat            Only minimally

- Did the different perspectives generate a deeper understanding of group dynamics? Did I gain insights about my Blind (re: Johari Window) based on the multiple perspectives?

  To a great extent            Somewhat            Only minimally

- Are my reflections based on specific CEs as opposed to starting with a theme based reflection? Yes/ No [Yes is the correct response]

- Have I filtered my reflections to focus on the four themes? Yes/No

The preceding reflections and explorations bring to surface the following four themes for me as the most significant for my personal learning. They are . . . .

Theme 1__________________________

Theme 2__________________________

Theme 3__________________________

Theme 4__________________________
Common challenges:

1) Starting this RO section with four themes instead of allowing them to emerge at the end as an outcome of your reflection using multiple perspectives. Starting the section with the themes implies that you have already made up your mind about them, thereby defeating the purpose of open reflection.

2) Not having multiple perspectives (That is, listing one perspective only which might be your personal views or reflection)

3) Reflecting more on others’ actions or the group’s and less on self

4) Raising questions or listing issues without grounding them with data/CE (Examples: Raising questions about power and norms though there is no mention of contributing events in CE)

5) Not exploring the nature or level of your participation in your small group

6) Not reflecting on key CE events. You must have RO on key experiences such as BOD, LSI, group decision making exercise, conflict style, social capital, group social capital, and appreciative feedback.

7) Asking many questions, but they are not based on multiple perspectives. The questions appear to be merely expanding the single perspective.

8) Reflecting on a high-level or overall basis only instead reflecting on specific CEs.

9) The themes chosen do not reflect the discussion in RO

Abstract Conceptualization: (25 points, 10 pages minimum)

- Have I related concepts from assigned readings (texts) to the group experience?

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<th>To a great extent</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Only minimally</th>
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  - In relating concepts/ readings to the experience, have I described what the readings are, or what they signify, instead of merely mentioning the concept, author, or a book? |

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  - In trying to make sense of the experiences, have I used concepts/ readings from the three texts instead of just one? Yes/No |

| Used three texts and other readings | Used two texts | Used one text |
- Have I used multiple readings for each theme? Yes/No [You need at least five separate citations for each theme]

- Have I conceptualized all four themes? Yes/No

- Have I devoted equal attention to all themes? Yes/No

**Common challenges:**

1. Not having enough readings and citations

2. Mentioning readings without adequate description

3. Having AC based on themes that were not evident in CE or discussed in RO

4. Writing about theories or using readings without clarifying how they apply or relate to specific CE (For example, writing a whole section on theories on self-efficacy without first sharing in CE section how you experienced it.)

5. Asking plenty of questions in RO but not answering them in AC

6. Using readings without clarity about which themes they are supposed to be addressing.

7. Using themes that are group based instead of self-focused.

Please note that this section carries 25 out of the 60 points allotted to the PRAE. You must use readings extensively to do well in this segment. Use Forsyth, Patterson et al, and Thatchenkery & Metzker, and any other reading you find relevant. It is not enough to mention readings. Explain what the readings are and show clearly how they apply to your specific experiences and reflections.

**Active Experimentation:** (13 points, about 5 pages)

- Have I described possible actions that would improve my effectiveness in the future in a situation (e.g., project teams) like this?

  To a great extent Somewhat Only minimally

- Have I described the generalizations that I can make from what I have learned from this experience to my work situation? (If you are not working now, consider a relevant prior work environment)

  To a great extent Somewhat Only minimally

16
• Are my A.E. plans described specifically and in detail?

To a great extent  Somewhat  Only minimally

• Do my AE plans have milestones or timelines? Yes / No

• Do my AE plans have measurable outcomes? Or, are they measurable? How will I know I have accomplished them? Yes / No

• Have I written at least one AE for each of the four themes that I have discussed in RO and AC section? Yes/No

You must separate your AE section into four parts with the following sub-headings:
AE for theme 1:
AE for theme 2:
AE for theme 3:
AE for theme 4:
Do not combine all themes into one AE. Each theme should have its own separate action items.

Common challenges:
1) Not having AE for each theme developed in RO and AC
2) AE looks more like an intention statement rather than an action plan. Merely expresses a desire to do something different, but does not state specifically the action component.
3) Coming up with AE statements that are not linked to the CE-RO-AC flow
4) Not mentioning the context of application (Where and when will I practice or implement my A.E. steps?)

Please list below your Learning Style (LSI) and Style Matters scores.

My CE:------; RO:-------; AC:------; AE:-------.

My Learning Style is ----------

*Style Matters* Calm and Storm scores: ------------------------------------------
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