**Lunar Survival Task**

The lunar survival task is a widely-used group deliberation task that assesses the effects of deliberation processes on decision-making quality. In small groups of 4-5, participants discuss a hypothetical survival scenario and rank the value of supplies that may aid in their survival. Group rankings are compared to individual rankings, average individual rankings (weak synergy), the rankings of the best-performing group member (strong synergy), and expert rankings (quality) to determine how group deliberation affects decision-making performance.

Hall, J., & Watson, W. H. (1970). The effects of a normative intervention on group decision-making performance. *Human Relations*, *23*, 299–317.

Larson, J. R., Jr. (2007). Deep diversity and strong synergy: Modeling the impact of variability in members’ problem-solving strategies on group problem-solving performance. *Small Group Research*, *38*, 413-436

Meslec, N., & Curşeu, P. L. (2013). Too close or too far hurts cognitive distance and

group cognitive synergy. *Small Group Research*, *44*, 471–497.

**Supplies:**

Consent forms

Participant Compensation forms

Lunar Survival Handout

Post-Test Questionnaires

Pens

**Procedure:**

1. Study facilitator sets the room with consent forms and pens for each participant
2. [5 minutes] 4-5 participants per session arrive at the lab and complete the consent process
3. Study facilitator collects consent forms and distributes the Lunar Survival Handout (attached)
4. [10 minutes] Without communicating with one another, participants complete individual item rankings
5. [15 minutes] Participants discuss rankings as a group and generate consensus group rankings
6. Study facilitator collects Lunar Survival Handout and distributes post-test questionnaire
7. [10 minutes] Participants complete post-test questionnaires
8. Participants complete Study Compensation forms and receive $10 each
9. Study facilitator files paperwork in the study binder and resets the room for the next set of participants

Total study time: 40 minutes

**Lunar Survival Task**

You are a member of a space crew originally scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship on the lighted surface of the moon. Due to mechanical difficulties, however, your ship was forced to land at a spot some 200 miles from the rendezvous point. During the crash landing, much of the equipment aboard was damaged and, since survival depends on reaching the mother ship, the most critical items available must be chosen for the trip. The reverse side of this sheet lists the 15 items left intact and undamaged after landing. Your task is to rank the items in terms of their importance in allowing your crew to reach the rendezvous point.

***Step 1.*** Without communicating with your teammates, rank each item in order of its importance for your survival. Place the number 1 by the most important item, the number 2 by the second-most important, and so on through number 15, the least important. Record these in the column labelled “Step 1.” You will have 10 minutes to complete this step.

***Step 2.*** Once everyone has completed their individual rankings, you will work as a group to rank the items. You will have 15 minutes to complete this step.

Your group should employ the method of *Group Consensus*in reaching its decision.  This means that the prediction for each of the 15 survival items must be agreed upon by each and every group member before it becomes part of the group decision.  Consensus is difficult to reach.  Therefore, not every ranking will meet with everyone's complete approval.  Try, as a group, to make each ranking one with which all team members can at least partially agree.  Here are some guidelines to use in reaching consensus:

1.  Avoid arguing for your own individual judgments.  Approach the task on the basis of logic by presenting your own views clearly and listening carefully to other members' suggestions and reactions.  
  
2.  when the discussion "locks," look for an alternative solution that is most acceptable for all group members.  The discussion is not on an individual win or lose basis.  
  
3.  Avoid changing your mind only in order to reach agreement and avoid conflict.  Support only solutions with which you are able to agree somewhat logically and objectively.  
  
4.  Avoid "conflict-reducing" techniques such as majority vote, averaging, or trading in reaching decisions.  
  
5.  View differences of opinion as helpful rather than as a hindrance in decision-making.

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| **Items** | **Step 1**  **(Individual Ranking)** | **Step 2**  **(Group Ranking)** |
| Box of matches |  |  |
| Food concentrate |  |  |
| 50 feet of nylon rope |  |  |
| Parachute silk |  |  |
| Portable heating unit |  |  |
| Two .45 caliber pistols |  |  |
| One case of dehydrated milk |  |  |
| Two 100-pound tanks of oxygen |  |  |
| Stellar map (of the moon’s constellation) |  |  |
| Life raft |  |  |
| Magnetic compass |  |  |
| 5 gallons of water |  |  |
| Signal flares |  |  |
| First aid kit containing injection needles |  |  |
| Solar-powered FM receiver transmitter |  |  |