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Modul Six Reflection

Module six was the last module of the semester for COMM 326, Small Group Discussion. The module completely focused on how to have a meaningful and efficient discussion within a small group dynamic. Three things that stood out to me during this last section of the class were: Get Acquainted with Your Group Members, Share Information with Others, and the concept of How to Formulate Discussion Questions.

I would like to start off with the principle Get Acquainted with Your Group Members. Beebe and Masterson explain that when a group forms it is vital that everyone knows each other. They go on to say, “Research has documented that if you and other group members take the time to identify who has special expertise or information, the group can work more effectively (Beebe & Masterson, p. 78)”. I noticed during the Unpopular Opinion activity that although I did not really know the group members, we all took a second to introduce ourselves and humanize each other. On top of that, when I gave my unpopular opinion, the whole group waited to say anything until I was done making my full point. Our group took the time to process the information and trusted that what I said was in good faith. In this case, because I was the one who prepared the opinion, I was the so-called member with “expertise” on the topic. Although there was a good amount of disagreement during our discussion, I felt that because we took a second to get acquainted, I was more laid back and our discussion was more efficacious than it would have been otherwise. It is cool to me that a group of near strangers can have a deep discussion about issues when I really only find that occurring in my day-to-day life with friends and family. I see an application of this concept (in the professional world) at the beginning of meetings. Rather than being on my phone, it would be wiser and more fruitful to introduce myself to everyone in the room and have a small conversation before the meeting starts.

I found the next concept, Share Information with Others, to be important as well. Our reading explains, “Groups typically make better decisions than individuals because there is typically more information among a group of people than in one person (Beebe & Masterson, p. 81)”. What stood out to me is how some governments have been set up with this principle in mind. Our own republic has been set up in such a way that no one person or faction can easily take complete power. Instead, our government is structured so that laws have to go through multiple groups in order to be passed, so that in theory the cream rises to the top. When our group met for the first time to discuss our wicked problems project, we made sure to discuss how we would attack the problem and divvy up the workload, I believe this resulted in better decisions being made. Professionally, I will be working with multiple groups of people designing software. Sharing information will be crucial because I am not an expert in everything, and although being a lone wolf has some logistical positives, in my experience it is almost never the results in a better overall project.

How to Formulate Discussion Questions resonated with me throughout the last part of module six. For an in-class exercise, Kachi had every group write down our points for the wicked problems presentation. The kicker is that every point had to be framed as a question. I found that for some reason, when each point was turned into a question, my mind automatically tried to answer it. This practice helped our group develop even more questions, and those questions grew into more questions. It made it easier to delve deeper into the heart of some of the issues we were discussing. My only regret when we first met for our presentation is that we did not spend more time asking fact-based , value-based , prediction-based , or policy-based questions, because it seemed that we would have had a better starting point when we researched our topic. I think a good workplace application of this principle would be when myself or my team is in problem-solving mode. It would be beneficial to take twenty minutes and ask those four categories of questions about the issue. Another good use of this concept is when (hopefully) I start a business and am laying out clear goals and aspirations to achieve.

In conclusion, module six was the shortest module, but one with a lot of practical advice. It was fun to be able to recognize the concepts taught in this module while doing the unpopular opinion exercise or when brainstorming for my group’s project.

# Works Cited

Beebe, S. A., & Masterson, J. (2012). *Communicating in Small Groups: Principles and Practices.* Pearson.