THE COMPETENT GROUP COMMUNICATOR

An Instrument to Assess Small Group Problem-Solving Discussion

Training Materials & Reliability Test

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The Competent Group Communicator Assessment Instrument

The Competent Group Communicator assessment form was designed to provide a valid and reliable tool to assess performance in a small group problem-solving discussion. Its purpose is to assess nine individual group member competencies in task-oriented discussions in which there is a problem to solve or a decision to make. The instrument focuses on assessing behaviors rather than knowledge about small group communication or motivation to participate in a group discussion.

The instrument serves several purposes: (1) evaluating student performance in problem-solving and decision-making group discussions in classes or training sessions; (2) assessing student's skill thus serving as a placement tool for participating in group discussions; (3) measuring pre- and post-test student mastery of small group communication behaviors taught in a small group communication course or seminar; and (4) generating assessment data which could help academic institutions or organizations determine the effectiveness of small group communication instruction and student mastery of group communication competencies.

The materials included in this paper include the training manual which is designed to be used to train others to use the Competent Group Communicator assessment form, a description of a study in which the assessment form was tested for reliability, and a reliability report for the instrument.

Training Manual for the Competent Group Communicator

Training Manual Developed by
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The Competent Group Communicator Instrument
General Overview and Introduction

The Competent Group Communicator is an instrument created to assess group and team interaction when engaged in a problem-solution discussion. The Competent Group Communicator assesses two main categories of group and team interaction: 1) task competencies and 2) relational competencies via nine group problem-solving competencies.

Group Task Competencies

1) Defined the problem
2) Analyzed the problem
3) Identified criteria
4) Generate Solutions
5) Evaluated Solutions

Group Relational Competencies

6) Maintained task focus
7) Managed group interaction
8) Managed conflict
9) Maintained climate

The Competent Group Communicator two categories are further organized into four functions of group interaction: 1) problem-oriented function, 2) solution-oriented function, 3) discussion management function, and 4) the relational function.

Group Task Competencies
Problem-Oriented Function

1) Defined the problem
2) Analyzed the problem

Solution-Oriented Function

3) Identified criteria
4) Generated solutions
5) Evaluate solutions

Group Relational Competencies
Discussion Management Function

6) Maintained task focus
7) Managed group interaction

Relational Function

8) Managed conflict
9) Maintained climate

Overview Of Group Communication Competencies

Problem-Oriented Function:

Defined the Problem: Effective group members appropriately define the problem that confronts the group. To define a problem is to determine what the group needs more or less of. Problem definition occurs when the group member identifies what the specific obstacle is that keeps the group from achieving it's goal. Effective group members clearly and appropriately define or describe the problem to be solved. Ineffective group members either inaccurately define the problem or make no attempt to clarify the problem or issues confront the group.

Analyzed the Problem: An effective group member appropriately analyzes the problem that confronts the group. To analyze a problem is to identify elements that cause the problem to occur. Effective group members offer statements that clearly and appropriately examine the causes, obstacles, history, symptoms, and significance of the problem to be solved. Ineffective members either don't analyze the problem or they do so inaccurately or inappropriately.

Solution-Oriented Function:

Identified Criteria: An effective group member appropriately participates in the establishment of the group goal and identifies criteria for assessing the quality of the group outcome. Effective group members offer clear and appropriate comments that identify the goal the group is attempting to achieve or identify specific criteria (or standards for an acceptable solution or outcome) for the problem facing the group. Criteria are standards for an acceptable solution or group outcome to an identified problem. Ineffective group members don't clarify the goal or establish criteria for solving the problem. Ineffective groups are not sure what they are looking for in a solution or outcome.

Generated Solutions: An effective group members seeks a solution or suggestion or strategy that solves the problem and helps the group achieve its goal. Effective group members offer several possible solutions or strategies to overcome the obstacles or decide on the issues confronting the group. Ineffective group members offer fewer solutions, or they rush to make a decision without considering other opinions.

Evaluated Solutions: Effective group members systematically evaluate the pros and the cons of the solutions that are proposed. They appropriately identify positive or negative consequences of the proposed solutions. Ineffective group members examine neither the positive and negative consequences nor the benefits and potential costs of a solution or a decision. Ineffective group members do not consider the consequences of a specific solution. They leap to a recommendation without looking at how the recommendation would solve the problem or result in unintended consequences.

Discussion Management Function:

Maintained Task Focus: Effective group members stay on track and keep their focus on the task at hand. Group members appropriately help the group stay on the group task, issue, or agenda item the group was discussing. Effective group members also summarize what the group is discussing to keep the group oriented. Ineffective group members have difficulty staying on track and digress from the issues at hand, and they also seldom summarize what the group has done, which means that group members aren't sure what they are accomplishing

Managed Group Interaction: Effective group members appropriately manage interactions by initiating and terminating discussion, contribute to the discussion, or invite others to contribute to the discussion. Effective group members actively look for ways to draw quieter members into the discussion and find tactful ways of decreasing contributions from group members who monopolize the discussion. Effective group members contribute their fair share of information and look for ways to keep the discussion from becoming a series of monologue. They encourage on-task, supportive dialogue. They also help to ensure that on or a few members do not monopolize the discussion. Ineffective group members either rarely contribute to the discussion or monopolize the discussion by talking too much. They also make little effort to draw others into the conversation and are not sensitive to the need for balanced interaction among group members.

Relational Function

Managed Conflict: Effective group members appropriately manage disagreements and conflict; they help the group stay focused on issues rather than personalities when conflict occurred. Effective group members are sensitive to differences of opinion and personal conflict, and they actively seek to manage the conflict by focusing on issues, information, and evidence rather than on personalities. Ineffective group members deal with conflict by making it personal; they are insensitive to the feelings of others and generally focus on personalities at the expense of issues.

Maintained Climate: Effective group members appropriately provide supportive comments to other group members. Effective group members look for opportunities to support and encourage other group members. Although they may not agree with all comments made, they actively seek ways to improve the climate and maintain positive relationships with other group members through both verbal and nonverbal expressions of support. They may appropriately use humor to lighten the mood of the group. Ineffective group members do just the opposite; they are personally critical of others and their frowning faces and strident voices non-verbally cast a gloomy pall over the group. Ineffective members do not use appropriate humor to lesson any tension between group members.

How to Use the Competent Group Communicator Evaluation Form

The Competent Group Communicator evaluation form is designed to assess the presence or absence of small group communication competencies in a group or team discussion. Competencies are specific behaviors that group or team members perform that result in a positive impression, given the people, objectives, environment, and time. Here is how to use the form (which can be found at the end of this packet).

1. Write the names of group members are the top of the form. (If you have more than five group members, photocopy the form so that each group member can be evaluated).

2. Observe a group or team that is attempting to solve a problem. Sample problem-solving discussion questions include: What should be done to decrease the numb er of teenagers who smoke cigarettes? What should be done to decrease the spread of AIDS in the United States? What should be done to make a college education affordable to all qualified citizens in the United States?

3. Videotape the discussion. Sometimes it is difficult to make several judgments about group competencies by viewing a group discussion only once. Many people find it easier to videotape the group discussion so they can observe the group discussion several times. Repeated viewing will enhance both the validity and reliability of the assessment of the nine competencies.

4. When using the form, first decide whether each group member has performed each competency, Circle "NO" if the group member was not observed performing the competency. Circle "YES" if you observed the group member performing the competency at least once (e.g. defining the problem, analyzing the problem, identifying criteria, and so on).

5. Total the score for each group member in each of the four functions.

6. You can also assess the overall impression of the group's ability to perform these nine competencies. the column marked "Group Assessment" can be used to record your impressions of how effectively the group or team behaved. Circle "NO" if no one in the group performed this competency. After you have judged whether the behavior was or was not performed, then determine the level or effectiveness of how well the entire group performed this competency using the 0 to 3 scale.

Criteria = 0: Not Observed
Subject was not observed performing the competency.

Yes = 0: Overall Inappropriate or Inadequate Performance of Competency.
Subject was observed inappropriately or inadequately performing the competency. Subject's behavior hindered the group's overall goal of solving the problem.

Yes = 1: Overall Adequate Performance of Competency.
Subject was observed clearly and appropriately performing the competency at least once.

Yes = 2: Overall Good Performance of Competency.
Subject was observed performing the competency clearly and appropriately at least two times.

Yes = 3: Overall Excellent Performance of Competency.
Subject was observed performing the competency three times or more.

Group Communication Competency 1: Defined the Problem

The group member appropriately defined the problem that confronted the group. To define a problem is to identify what the group wants more or less of to overcome an obstacle to achieve a goal.   When defining the problem the group member specifically identifies obstacles, hindrances, or other aspects of a situation that prohibits a desired outcome.

> **Sample Problem:** increase parking at a university.
> **Not Observed:** subject or group was not observed defining the problem.

Yes = 0: Overall Inappropriate or Inadequate Performance of Competency.

Subject inaccurately, inappropriately, or unclearly attempted to define the problem. Subject's behavior or communication hindered the group's goal of defining the problem.

> Example: Subject makes no effort to define the problem or says, "I hate parking! It's such a pain." [This statement expresses frustration but does not attempt to define the specific problem.]

Yes = 1: Overall Adequate Performance of Competency.

Subject made at least one attempt to identify or define key aspects of the problem. Makes an explicit statement such as, "the key problem is . . . ." Or "here's the problem we're trying to solve . . . ." Or "here's the primary problem, ..."

> Example: Here's the problem. We have too many commuter students. Parking is especially difficult for commuter students.

Yes = 2: Overall Good Performance of Competency.

Subject made at least two comments that identified and defined key aspects of the problem.

> Example: The problem is students are late to class because they have to keep circling in their cars looking for a parking space.

Yes = 3: Overall Excellent Performance of Competency.

Subject made two or more comments that clearly and appropriately identified and defined multiple key aspects of the problem.

> Example: The problem is that there are too many cars and not enough parking spaces for students or faculty.

Group Communication Competency 2: Analyzed the Problem

The group member appropriately analyzed the problem that the group had previously defined. Specifically the group member identified the problem's history, relevant information, data, evidence, causes, obstacles, symptoms, or significance.

> **Sample Problem:** increase parking at a university.
> **Not Observed:** subject or group was not observed analyzing the problem.

Yes = 0: Overall Inappropriate or Inadequate Performance of Competency.

Subject's behavior or communication hindered the group's goal of solving the problem because the subject did not accurately or appropriately analyze the problem.

> Example: I think we should make the faculty/administration park as far away as we have too, then they'd know how much it stinks! [Complaining hinders group's ability to solve the problem].

Yes = 1: Overall Adequate Performance of Competency.

Subject offered at least one comment that partially analyzed a key aspect of the problem.

> Example: We've had a parking problem here for at least five years. This is a long-standing problem.

Yes = 2: Overall Good Performance of Competency.

Subject offered at least two comments that clearly analyzed at least one key aspect of the problem.

> Example: Parking problems on the west campus impacts approximately the 600 hundred students living there. [Clearly analyzed the significance of the problem with data].

Yes = 3: Overall Excellent Performance of Competency.

Subject clearly and appropriately analyzed multiple key aspects of the problem. Subject made two or more comments that analyzed multiple key aspects of the problem.

> Example: Parking has been an issue since 1990, when the new dorms, housing 600 additional students were built on the west campus. Student enrollment has steadily increased since then while parking spots have remained the same. Clearly a major obstacle is space; there is limited space in the west campus. [Clearly analyzed the problem's history, causes, and obstacles].

Group Communication Competency 3: Identified Criteria

The group member appropriately established criteria for the assessing the quality of the group's solution and participated in identifying the group's goal. Criteria are standards for an acceptable solution. For example, saying that the solution should be implemented by a certain time, cost no more than a certain amount of money are examples of criteria.

> **Sample Problem:** increase parking at a university.
> **Not Observed:** subject was not observed establishing the group's goal or identifying criteria.

Yes = 0: Overall Inappropriate or Inadequate Performance of Competency.

Subject inaccurately identified criteria or establishes the group's goal. Subject's behavior or communication hindered the group's goal of solving the problem.

> Example: Let's not waste our time trying to figure out how many parking spaces we need. Let someone else worry about that.

Yes = 1: Overall Adequate Performance of Competency.

Subject made at least one comment that attempted to establish the group's goal but was unclear or incomplete; or partially identified a key criterion for the solution.

> Example: Based upon our data and analysis it looks like we need to find a way to add about 600 new parking spaces.

Yes = 2: Overall Good Performance Of Competency.

Subject made at least two comments that clearly and appropriately identified or elaborated at least one key criterion; or clearly and appropriately contributed to the establishment of the group goal.

> Example: Whatever solution we develop we need to make sure we save most of the historic trees in the west campus. [Clearly identifies saving the trees as an important criteria]. Or: what do we want the end product to look like? [Clearly contributes to identifying the group's goal]

Yes = 3: Overall Excellent Performance of Competency.

Subject made two or more comments that clearly and appropriately identified or elaborated multiple criteria, or clearly and appropriately contributed to the group's goal.

> Example: Above all, we can only spend our budget of $3,000. Keeping in mind that the trees need to be saved but also must considering safety, space, and location. [Clearly identifies the groups' goal and criteria].

Group Communication Competency 4: Generated Solutions

Group member appropriately identify solutions or alternatives to solve the problem that the group was seeking to solve.

>**Sample Problem:** increase parking at a university.
>**Not Observed:** subject or group was not observed identifying solutions to the problem.

Yes = 0: Overall Inappropriate or Inadequate Performance of Competency.

Subject offered inaccurate solutions or alternatives to problem identified by the group. Subject's behavior or communication hindered the brainstorming of solutions or alternatives.

>Example: We tried that once and it didn't work. [Hinders the generation of solutions or alternatives by evaluating them immediately].

Yes = 1: Overall Adequate Performance of Competency.

Subject made at least one comment that attempted to generate a solution.

>Example: Perhaps we could build a new parking garage and fund it with student service fees.

Yes = 2: Overall Good Performance of Competency.

Subject offered at least two explicit, clear, and appropriate solutions or alternatives to the problem identified by the group.

>Example: We could pave the athletic field next to the west campus [clearly a possible solution].

Yes = 3: Overall Excellent Performance of Competency.

Subject made more than two comments that clearly and appropriately generated or modified multiple solutions.

>Example: We could do a number of things from building a parking garage or lot   in the west campus to limit the number of vehicles per-student to not allowing first year students to bring vehicles to campus. [Clearly identifies multiple solutions or alternatives to previously defined problem].

Group Communication Competency 5: Evaluated Solutions

Group member appropriately evaluate solutions or alternatives previously identified by the group. The group member discussed either the pros or cons of a specific solution (or identified both pros and cons of a specific solution),

> **Sample Problem:** increase parking at a university.
> **Not Observed:** subject or group was not observed evaluating solutions to the problem (examining the pros and cons of specific solutions).

Yes = 0: Overall Inappropriate or Inadequate Performance of Competency.

Subject offered inaccurate consequences (positive or negative) to solutions or alternatives to problem. Subject's behavior or communication hindered the group from evaluating solutions or alternatives to the problem.

> Example: There is no way we could do that! [Hinders evaluation by outright rejecting solution or alternative to the problem without evaluating it].

Yes = 1: Overall Adequate Performance of Competency.

Subject made at least one comment that attempted to evaluate a solution, but was inadequate, incomplete or unclear and needed modification from group members.

> Example: That first idea is great! It meets are criteria in that it doesn't put us over our budget.

Yes = 2: Overall Good Performance of Competency.

Subject offered at least two explicit, clear, and appropriate positive or negative consequence to a solution or alternative to the problem.

> Example: By paving the field next to the west campus, we'd spend only a portion of the budget; that would mean we'd have a lower student service fee. [Clearly identifies a positive outcome of one possible solution].

Yes = 3: Overall Excellent Performance of Competency.

Subject offered more than two comments that clearly and appropriately identified accurate positive or negative consequences of the solutions.

> Example: By building a parking garage we could use a limited amount of ground space, thus saving a majority of the historic trees in the west campus field, and maximize the amount of the parking spaces. However, a parking garage would be considerably more expensive than a parking lot. [Clearly identifies positive and negative consequences to a proposed solution].

Group Communication Competency 6: Maintained Task Focus

The group member appropriately stay on the task, issue, or agenda item the group was discussing and helped others stay on task.

> **Sample Problem:** increase parking at a university.
> **Not Observed:** subject or group was not observed participating in a way that helped the group stay on task.

Yes = 0: Overall Inappropriate or Inadequate Performance of Competency.

Subject made inappropriate comments that got the group off-task. Subject's behavior or communication was irrelevant to the group's discussion.

> Example: So what is everyone doing later? [Off-task, irrelevant, and distracting comment that hinders the group' s discussion].

Yes = 1: Overall Adequate Performance of Competency.

Subject made at least one comment that attempted to maintain task focus but was inadequate, incomplete or unclear and needed modification from group members. Subject made minimal comments relevant to the group's task.

> Example: So we seem to be getting of the topic here. Shouldn't we be focusing on ways to solve the problem instead of talking about tv programs.

Yes = 2: Overall Good Performance of Competency.

Subject offered at least two explicit, clear, and appropriate summary of the group's discussion related to the task. Subject generally made appropriate comments relevant to the group's task.

> Example: Let' me summarize what we've said. So far we've defined increase, parking, and university. I think we're ready to analyze the problem. [Clearly summarizes the discussion to define the problem].

Yes = 3: Overall Excellent Performance of Competency.

Subject offered more than two comments that clearly and appropriately summarized group discussion or made more than two task-relevant comments that helped define the issues, analyze the issues, and generated or evaluate solutions.

> Example: Let's get back to the problem we're discussing. So far, we've identified the following solutions: building a new parking lot or parking garage, restricting the number of vehicles allotted per student, and restricting first-year students from bring a vehicle to campus. Keeping in mind the previously identified criteria for a solution: saving the historic trees, safety, space, location, and the budget. Let's discuss the pros and cons of each solution. [Clearly summarizes multiple group discussions and provides opportunity for further task-related discussion].

Group Communication Competency 7: Managed Group Interaction

The group member appropriately managed interaction by initiating and terminating discussion, contributing to the discussion, or inviting others to contribute to the discussion.

> **Sample Problem:** increase parking at a university.
> **Not Observed:** subject or group was not observed managing group interaction.

Yes = 0: Overall Inappropriate Or Inadequate Performance Of Competency.

Subject dominated or withdrew from the group discussion. Either talked too much or did not participate or rarely participated in the discussion.

Yes = 1: Overall Adequate Performance Of Competency.

Subject made at least one comment that attempted to manage interaction.
Subject did not dominate or withdraw from group's discussion.

> Example: Carrie, I'd like to hear what your ideas are. What do you think? [An inappropriate attempted to elicit other opinions because carrie has dominated group discussion].

Yes = 2: Overall Good Performance Of Competency.

Subject made at least two clear and appropriate attempts to manage interaction by inviting non-talkative group member's to participate and limiting over-talkative group member's participation, either verbally or non-verbally.

> Example: Benito, before you begin, let's see if Katrina has an idea. [Clear attempt to quell over-talkative group member while inviting a non-talkative group member's opinion].

Yes = 3: Overall Excellent Performance Of Competency.

Subject made two or more comments which clearly and appropriately initiated and terminated discussion, so as to not talk too much of too little. Subject clearly and appropriately invited others to speak, verbally or non-verbally. Subject was overall a successful gatekeeper in managing interaction.

> Example: [subject looks at a quite group member to see if the quite member wants to talk.] Marcia, is there something you'd like to add? [Pauses.] Is there anything anyone else wants to share about possible solutions?

Group Communication Competency 8: Managed Conflict

The group member appropriately and constructively helped the group stay focused on issues rather than personalities when conflict occurred. When there was a disagreement, the group member focused on data and information to help manage the conflict.

> **Sample Problem:** increase parking at a university.
> **Not Observed:** subject or group was not observed managing conflict.

Yes = 0: Overall Inappropriate or Inadequate Performance of Competency.

Subject made comments that escalated conflict or tension; focused on personalities and personal differences rather than focus on substantive issues; made comments that were insensitive to others. Subject's general behavior or communication hindered the management of conflict.

> Example: That's such a stupid idea, jake you don't know what you're talking about. [Comment is insensitive, contains personal judgment and lacks substance].

Yes = 1: Overall Adequate Performance of Competency.

Subject made at least one comment that attempted to manage conflict.

> Example: Carmelita, it sounds like you are frustrated with Jake's ideas. What do you think we need to do to help solve this problem? I think we can make progress if we focus on the issues.

Yes = 2: Overall Good Performance of Competency.

Subject made at least two clear and appropriate comments that attempted to integrate differing opinions or solutions to help manage conflict by focusing on issues, information, and evidence as opposed to personalities.

> Example: Sean, I understand that you are upset, but there may be more than just one solution to this problem. What are other options that you think we should consider?

Yes = 3: Overall Excellent Performance of Competency.

Subject made more than two clear and appropriate comments that attempted to integrate differing opinions or solutions to help manage conflict by focusing on issues, information, and evidence as opposed to personalities.

> Example: Instead of focusing on Diallo' s track record for ideas, let's examine the merit of the idea [steers focus away from Diallo and onto issues].

Group Communication Competency 9: Maintained Climate

The group member offered positive verbal comments or nonverbal expressions, that helped maintain a positive group climate. Positive nonverbal expression include a positive (smiling) facial expression, head nods, forward leaning, engaging body posture, and appropriate eye contact with the speaker.

>   **Sample Problem:** increase parking at a university.
>   **Not Observed:** subject or group was not observed maintaining climate.

Yes = 0: Overall Inappropriate or Inadequate Performance of Competency.

Subject made comments that criticized and evaluated people rather than ideas. Subject interjected more negative comments with accompany negative expressions than positive comments.

>   Example: Ethan, you are always corning up with idiotic ideas. [Comment clearly criticizes Ethan].

Yes = 1: Overall Adequate Performance of Competency.

Subject attempted to manage climate by offering verbal or nonverbal support for an idea..

>   Example: Allen smiles and leans forward and says, "Robert, that's a great idea! I think we're really making progress now."

Yes = 2: Overall Good Performance of Competency.

Subject made at least two comments that were verbally and non-verbally supportive and positive in nature.

>   Example: That's great, Lisa! [Also nods head to communicate agreement].

Yes = 3: Overall Excellent Performance of Competency.

Subject made more than one clear and appropriate positive comment with accompanying supportive nonverbal expression to another group member that reinforced good work. Subject used humor in a positive way to improve or maintain positive climate.

>   Example: All right group, we're really getting somewhere now! Aren't we Bryan? [Clearly a positive and supportive comment].

Competent Group Communicator Scoring

Sub-Totaling the Functions Per Group Member

Once each of the nine competencies have been independently scored (no (0), yes (1, 2, or 3), then the subtotals for each function are calculated. Add each function's competency scores and place that number in the appropriate box at the bottom of the competent group communicator evaluation form.

Interpreting the Scores

Evaluating the Nine Group Competencies

An individual score of zero (0) indicates the subject observed did not demonstrate competence on the specific competency.

To be minimally competent on each of the nine competencies, a group member should receive at least a score of one (1). A score of one (1) = adequate minimal competence

An individual score of two (2) indicates a good performance on the competency. A score of two (2) = good competence.

An individual score of three (3) indicates an excellent performance of the competent behavior.

A score of three (3) – excellent competence

Evaluating the Competence of the Four Competence Functions

(Problem-Oriented, Solution-Oriented, Discussion-Management, and Relational Competencies)

An individual score of zero (0) indicates the subject observed did not demonstrate competence on the function.

Problem-Solving Competencies
1-2 = Adequate
2-4 = Good
5-6 = Excellent

Solution-Oriented Competencies
1-3 = Adequate
4-6 = Good
7-9 = Excellent

Discussion-Management Competencies
1-2 = Adequate
2-4 = Good
5-6 = Excellent

Relational Competencies
1-2 = Adequate
2-4 = Good
5-6 = Excellent

Overall Group Communication Analysis

The competent group communication evaluation form is also used to make a holistic assessment of the group's performance on each of the nine competencies. At the conclusion of the group discussion, the evaluator should make a holistic assessment of the group's ability to demonstrate specific competence on each of the nine competencies.

No group member was observed performing the competencies: 0

Overall Inappropriate or Inadequate Performance of Group Communication Competencies: 0

Group was observed inappropriately or inadequately performing the competency. Overall the group's behavior kept the group from demonstrating competence on the specific competency evaluated.

Overall Adequate Performance of Group Communication Competencies: 1

Because one or more group members demonstrated the competence, the group, as a whole, seemed to demonstrate an understanding of and behavior that suggested the group adequately achieved minimal group competence. One or more group members observed clearly and appropriately performing the competency at least once that resulted in the group adequately achieving the specific competency.

Overall Good Performance of Group Communication Competencies: 2

Because one or more group members demonstrated the competence at least twice, the group, as a whole, seemed to demonstrate an understanding of and behavior that suggested the group demonstrated that it effectively and appropriately performed the group competence. One or more group members observed clearly and appropriately performing the competency at least twice which resulted in the group achieving the specific competency evaluated as good.

Overall Excellent Performance of Group Communication Competencies: 3

Because one or more group members demonstrated the competence at least three times, the group, as a whole, seemed to demonstrate an understanding of and behavior that suggested the group demonstrated that it did an excellent job of performing the group competence. One or more group members observed clearly and appropriately performing the competency at least three times that resulted in the group achieving the specific competency evaluated as excellent.

Reliability Test of The Competent Group Communicator
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Reliability Assessment Study

A reliability assessment study was conducted using ten graduate students to assess the inter-rater reliability of the competent group communicator assessment instrument. This reliability assessment study consisted of three phases.

In phase one, the ten graduate students were trained on how to use the assessment instrument. This one-hour training program included learning more about the nine competencies that comprise the instrument and the four-item rating scale that is used to assess each of the nine small group communication competencies.

In phase two, the ten graduate students were paired and then shown a 30-minute videotaped small group problem-solving discussion. While watching the videotape, each pair of coders was assigned to assess one of the five group members in the videotaped problem-solving group. Following the videotaped presentation, each member of the coding pair was instructed to individually complete the competent group communicator assessment instrument for the assigned individual.

Once each member of the pair was finished, the pairs were instructed in how to compute their inter-rater reliability estimates. The percentage of agreement (%) method was used to compute inter-rater reliability. Although this method is usually reserved for scales using nominal data rather than interval data, the method was chosen for its ease in computation. Since the competent group communicator assessment instrument is designed to be used in non-academic as well as academic settings, and to encourage the computation of inter-rater reliability, the percentage of agreement method was chosen over other more complex statistical methods. The five pairs of coders had percentage of agreements ranging from 44% to 67%. After a brief re-training, the five pairs of coders were shown the same video again and were asked to rate the same group member. This time, percentage of agreements ranged from 78% to 89%.

In phase three, the ten graduate students were re-paired with another graduate student and were shown another 30-minute videotaped problem-solving group. While watching the videotape, each pair of coders was assigned to assess one of the five group members in the videotaped problem-solving group. In addition to assessing the assigned group member, the pairs of coders were also asked to assess the group as a whole using the nine small group communication competencies. Following the videotaped presentation, each member of the coding pair was instructed to individually complete the competent group communicator assessment instrument for the assigned individual and for the group. The five pairs of coders had percentage of agreements ranging from 55% to 78% for the assigned individual and percentage of agreements ranging from 33% to 77% for the entire group.

Based on this single inter-rater reliability assessment study, the competent group communicator assessment instrument appears to have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability. Additional training and assessment experience will enhance the inter-rater reliability of the competent group communicator assessment instrument.

The Competent Group Communicator Assessment Form

Group Communication Competencies	Group Member _____		Group Member _____		Group Member _____		Group Member _____		Group Member _____		Overall Group Assessment	
Problem-Oriented Competencies												
1. Defined the problem by identifying the obstacle(s) that prevent the group from achieving its goal; identified what the group wants more of or less of to achieve the goal.	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3
2. Analyzed the problem the group attempted to solve. Used relevant information or data, discussed the causes, history, symptoms, or significance of the problem.	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3
Solution-Oriented Competencies												
3. Identified criteria for an appropriate solution to the problem; developed standards for an acceptable solution; identified ideal outcomes of the solution.	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3
4. Generated solutions or strategies that would solve the problem the group identified.	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3
5. Evaluated solution(s): Identified positive and/or negative consequences of the proposed solutions; considered the pros and cons of suggested solutions.	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3
Discussion Management Competencies												
6. Maintained task focus: Helped the group stay on or return to the task, issue, or agenda item the group was discussing.	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3
7. Managed group interaction: Appropriately initiated and ended discussion, contributed to the discussion, or invited others to contribute to the discussion.	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3
Relational Competencies												
8. Managed conflict: Appropriately and constructively helped the group to stay focused on issues rather than personalities when conflict occurred.	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3
9. Maintained climate: Offered positive verbal comments and/or nonverbal expressions to help maintain a positive group climate.	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3	No 0	Yes 1 2 3
Scoring												
Problem-Oriented Competencies (0-6)												
Solution-Oriented Competencies (0-9)												
Discussion Management Competencies (0-6)												
Relational Competencies (0-6)												