IHA | ENGINEERING COLLEGE OF AARHUS

Compendium for CLP
Cooperation, Learning and Project work

August 2010

Contents of this compendium:

The material in this compendium is complemented by the "Introductory week handout" comprising the following elements:

Introductory week hand-out:

15. Dyrbye, Helen; Steven Harris and Thomas Golzen (1997) "The Xenophobe's Guide to the Danes" p 5-10. Ravette Publishing.

16. N.M.Dixon (1999) "The organizational learning cycle". Chapter 4 in: The organizational learning Cycle, Glower, Aldershot, p.63 – 68.

17. Two short notes: Becoming a member of a new group. Anxiety of members of a new group.

Further recommended reading for the introduction week

18. The Royal Danish Foreign Ministry (2009) "Denmark, an Overview". In: http://www.denmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/916BAEE6-AFB8-4720-B118-03366AB1154A/0/DenmarkOverview.pdf

Respecting Our Differences and Working Together

by Marcelle E. Du Praw, and Marya Axner

In addition to helping us to understand ourselves and our own cultural frames of reference, knowledge of these six patterns of cultural difference can help us to understand the people who are different from us. An appreciation of patterns of cultural difference can assist us in processing what it means to be different in ways that are respectful of others, not faultfinding or damaging.

Anthropologists Avruch and Black have noted that, when faced by an interaction that we do not understand, people tend to interpret the others involved as "abnormal," "weird," or "wrong." *(Avruch and Black, 1993)* This tendency, if indulged, gives rise on the individual level to prejudice. If this propensity is either consciously or unconsciously integrated into organizational structures, then prejudice takes root in our institutions -- in the structures, laws, policies, and procedures that shape our lives. Consequently, it is vital that we learn to control the human tendency to translate "different from me" into "less than me." We can learn to do this.

We can also learn to collaborate across cultural lines as individuals and as a society. Awareness of cultural differences doesn't have to divide us from each other. It doesn't have to paralyze us either, for fear of not saying the "right thing." In fact, becoming more aware of our cultural differences, as well as exploring our similarities, can help us communicate with each other more effectively. Recognizing where cultural differences are at work is the first step toward
understanding and respecting each other.

Learning about different ways that people communicate can enrich our lives. People's different communication styles reflect deeper philosophies and world views which are the foundation of their culture. Understanding these deeper philosophies gives us a broader picture of what the world has to offer us.

Learning about people's cultures has the potential to give us a mirror image of our own. We have the opportunity to challenge our assumptions about the "right" way of doing things, and consider a variety of approaches. We have a chance to learn new ways to solve problems that we had previously given up on, accepting the difficulties as "just the way things are."

Lastly, if we are open to learning about people from other cultures, we become less lonely. Prejudice and stereotypes separate us from whole groups of people who could be friends and partners in working for change. Many of us long for real contact. Talking with people different from ourselves gives us hope and energizes us to take on the challenge of improving our communities and worlds.

Belbin – background and roles

"Nobody is perfect – but a team can be"

(Translation of "KMD-dialog", Jan. 1995. Translated by Peder Maribo)

Does the perfect leader exist?
In too many years the selection of the successful management has almost solemnly focused on finding the right individual. The companies has primarily been interested in the qualifications, competence, experiences and results of the individual, but deep down we all know that the perfect person for a given job can not be found as he does not exist.

Any attempt to summarize the qualifications of a good leader proofs why he does not exist. Too many of the qualifications are mutually excluding each other.

- He must be intelligent yet not too smart
- He must be powerful and yet be very sensitive to other persons feelings
- He must be decisive and dynamic but patient
- He must be a prominent speaker yet also good at listening

And so on. And if you should be able to discover this ideal leader with these extraordinary qualifications, what do you do if he gets hit by the bus, goes abroad or leaves for a better job?

No individual can posses all these leadership qualities, but a group of persons can! A team can renew and revitalize itself through recruiting, as the members of the team leaves or retire. The team can jointly identify all the conflicting qualifications – behavioural clusters, personal traits and intellectual styles – which can not be united in one single person. It can construct a common core of shared experiences, information and strategies that can be passed on as an older member of the team retires and a younger one arrives. And it can be in 10 different places at one time.

Why teams?
Many of us must have experienced parts of the truth about teams our self. One often see that one person who had good success as a member of one group is malfunctioning in another. It has been seen how an efficient and effective team are totally destroyed if one member is promoted without anyone having considered if it was possible to promote the group or expand it's field of operation. And one have seen how teams are capable of performing in quantity and quality far exceeding the sum of the individual team members. The natural consequence of this is that we – without overlooking or neglecting the individual – must be more aware of what makes "a team". How do we compose, develop and facilitate teams based on the qualifications, experiences and previous results, (professional abilities) but not least based on their personal abilities, their psychology, logic, motivation, drive and behaviour. But how?

Do you have a preferred team role?
The problem is, that compared to our knowledge on individual psychology, motivation and behaviour our knowledge on what makes a team successful is limited.

Dr. Meridith Belbin from the University of Cambridge claims that all members of a team play a double role. The primary role, the functional, is evident. A person belong in a team because he is the financial expert, the school headmaster, the technical specialist or what ever. The second role, the one Belbin calls the "team role" is not so evident, and yet we all are able to sense it from having worked in teams.

We know e.g. that Peter always bring up new ideas, that Anna wants decisions to be made and tasks delegated, and Brian has a tendency to bring attention to the downside of new ideas etc. And we know that Peter, Anna and Brian tend to behave in this way whatever group they are part of, whether it's a planning committee, the golf club board, or the garden party committee. If you give it further thoughts, there cant be so many of these characteristic roles, that pops up all the time, and it must be an advantage if a group have these different characters to complement and balance each other.

On Belbins method of investigation
It is these persistent characteristics, these team roles, which has been the key point of investigation for Belbin. The result is that he has isolated and identified eight arc-type roles performed by group members. He worked more than seven years forming hypothesis, testing, explaining and revising them and re-testing them, until he where capable of presenting a remarkable study of the anatomy of teams based on a huge amount of experimental data. Since the development of the eight team roles they have been tested in a large number of contexts, among these they have been used to train and test teams via role-plays and business games and a method to predict the role-profile of a team based on self-assessment has been developed. Belbin claims that knowing a team profile in advance not only makes it possible to predict weather a team will have success or will fail but also makes it possible to take the appropriate action before failure occurs.

Belbin and his co-workers developed a remarkable ability to compose teams that would work successfully together, even without having to meet the team members in person. The advantage of knowing each member of a group can be wasted if you do not work with a team role guide theory. Most leaders are likely to choose the smartest and best qualified people they can find. Unfortunately it turns out that the group possessing the greatest risk of failure is composed solely of the smartest people.

As we have seen this insight in team roles and team dynamics can be used to compose teams with potential for success, but the insight also makes it possible for e given team to recognize their strengths and weaknesses and thus take action to prevent the potential conflicts and malfunctions in the group. Knowing your weaknesses is a great strength.

What is investigated?
Belbin and his co-workers learned to recognize individuals who had a key influence on the team and they gave names to these team-roles. The reason for the name of these team-roles is not always selfexplanatory, in fact they are sometimes a little misleading, but it makes sence to use them on the condition that it is the descriptions and not the names that matters. Not all tested persons belonged into one of the defined categories, 30 % clearly did not match any of the defined team-roles. Most people

have elements of several of the team-roles, but often one of the roles tend to be dominating.

Belbins psychometrical tests revolves around four main factors identified by the tests. These factors are:

- Intelligence
- Dominance
- Extrovert / introvert
- Stability / activity (unrest)

It was the balance betweens the individual score on these four scales plus the score on a number of secondary parameters that determined which team-role a person was most representative of. Even if all persons had a primary (preferred) team role, it turned out that they also had a secondary (supportive) team-role they could play if no one else filled out this space in the team and if someone in the team played their primary role better than them self.

In the following the eight team roles defined by Belbin are explained.

Coordinator (or "Chair")
Characteristics: Stable, dominant, extrovert.
The term Coordinator is one of the slightly misleading role-names as he (or she) is not often the team leader. Nevertheless team leading is what he/she is best at. He/she is most often talking and promoting decision-making in the group, coordinating the groups effort to achieve external goals. The Coordinator is occupied of setting goals. You would expect that he is at least normally but not extraordinary intelligent and not a very creative thinker. He seldom corners the new creative ideas. He is more noted for what could be called "character" or "charisma" or perhaps "authority" is a better word. His way of working is disciplined and based on self discipline. He is dominant but in a relaxed and far from self promoting way – he is not power greedy. He has an instinct for believing in people, unless there are strong evidence for their incredibility and he is extraordinary free of being jealous.

He is the one that most clearly sees which team-members that are strong, and which are weak with respect to the different tasks of the team and he makes people focusing on what they are best at. He is aware of the need of making usage of the combined human resources of the team as efficient as possible. This implies that he/she is the one that determine the roles and tasks of the team members as well as the one that spot the gaps and take initiative to fill them out.

The Coordinator is easy to talk with and a good communicator does not talk too much or too little and is a good listener. He clarifies the goal of the team and set the agenda. He chooses problems that the team need to work on and determines priorities in the work without attempting to dominate the discussion. His own contributions in the early stages of the group work are in the form of questions more than statements or suggestions. He listens and concludes on the feelings of the group and formulates the statements of the group. If a decision needs to be taken, he does so after letting everyone speak their mind.

The Initiator (or "Shaper")
Characteristics: Impatient, dominant, extrovert.
Some team observers has suggested that a team need a social leader, which is the groups permanent head, and a special assignment leader who are responsible for a single well defined project, just as a nation often has a president (or head of state) with a permanent function and a prime minister which heads the government and is in charge of the more specific task of implementing a policy. If this is the case the Initiator is the leader of a task and the Coordinator is the social leader. The Initiator is most likely the actual leader of the team in case of lack of coordinator, or in the case in which the Coordinator is in fact not the team leader.

The Initiator is full of nervous energy; he is extrovert, emotional, impulsive, impatient and from time to time irritable and easy to frustrate. He is not hesitating to challenge or to receive a challenge (witch he likes). He often engages is vigorous discussions and quarrels and he does not have any hard feelings afterwards. In the entire team he is the one who is most paranoid, quickly senses if he is put aside and the first to sense that there is a conspiracy under way and that he is the victim of it.

The Initiator has an air of self-confidence, which often contradicts a disbelief in own abilities. Only results can calm him down. His drive, which has an compulsory character, is always aimed at his goal. These goals are usually also the goals of the team, but the Initiator also to a greater extend than the Coordinator see these goals as an extension of his own ego. He demands action here and now. He is a competitive person, intolerant to vague talk and unclear thoughts and people outside the team has a tendency to describe him as arrogant and rejecting. Even persons inside the team are in danger of being run over by the Initiator and from time to time he makes the team feel unease but he always makes things happen.

Idea Generator (or "Plant")
Characteristics: Dominating, highly intelligent, introvert.
The Idea generator originally got his name when it was discovered that the best way to increase the achievement in an ineffective and uninspired team was to "plant" such a personality into the team. You can also see the Idea Generator as the one who spread the seeds, which the other team members then nourish until they bear fruit.

The Idea generator is the team's source of original ideas and suggestions. Naturally also other team members get ideas, but the ideas of the Idea Generator tend to have an extraordinary originality and a fundamentally different attitude to problems and obstacles. He is the most fantastic and often the most intelligent member of the team, keen to look for completely new ways to approach a problem if the team looses momentum or by giving new insight to an already decided plan of action. He is far more occupied big and fundamental issues than by details, and he is likely to overlook important details and make careless mistakes.

He is butting in on situations in an inappropriate way, which is pretty characteristic for an introvert person. He can also be picking on other members of a group, in particular when criticizing their ideas. His critique is often used to make way of his own ideas and is often followed by his own alternative suggestions.

The danger of the Idea generator is that he will devote much of his energy to ideas he is fascinated by but which does not fall in line with the needs of the team and it's goals.

He can have difficulties in receiving critique of own ideas and quickly get offended and become sulking if his ideas are dismantled or rejected. Perhaps he will shut off and refuse to contribute any further. It takes a lot of manoeuvring and well considered flatter (usually from the Coordinator) to get the best out of him. But despite these shortcomings it is the Idea generator that provides the vital spark to the teamwork.

Analyst (or "Monitor – Evaluator")
Characteristics: Highly intelligent, stable, introvert.
In a well balanced team only the Idea generator and the Analyst need to be very intelligent, but opposed to the Idea generator the Analyst is a bit of a cold fish. By temper he is typically serious and not very exiting. His contributions lies in the distant and impassionate analysis more than in his creative ideas, and although he is not likely to produce something original, he will most likely prevent the group from engaging in a misguiding project.

Even though he by nature is more critical than inventive, he will normally not criticize just to be critical, but only if he sees something missing in a plan or an argument. He tend to be the least motivating in the group, as euphoria and enthusiasm is not his part of his personality. This has the positive implication that his ego or judgement not distorts his judgements. He takes long time to make up his mind and like to have time to think about things, but he is the most objective in the group. One of his most valuable assets is the ability to be able to appropriate, interpret and evaluate large amounts of complex written material, and be able to analyse problems and evaluate the judgements and contributions of the other team members. From time to time this makes him ruthless and patronising which does not increase his popularity and he can lower the morale of the group by putting too much of a damper on it at the wrong time. Even though he is not ambitious and have a low drive, he can be competitive, in particular toward persons whose qualifications overlap his own, which would typically be the Coordinator or the Idea Generator.

It is important for the Analyst to be fair and open to new opportunities, but there is a chance he might be depressing negative and allow his critical character to out-shade his openness to new ideas.

Even though he is solid and reliable he lacks humour, warm imagination and spontaneity. Never the less he comprises a quality invaluable to the group: his judgements are seldom wrong.

The Organiser (or "Administrator" or "Implementer")
Characteristics: Stabile and controlled.
The Organiser is a practical person converting decisions and strategies into well defined, logical and operational tasks. He is interested in what is possible, and his most valuable contributions to the team is to transform the plans of the group into something that can actually be realised.

Like the Coordinator he has character and a disciplined way of working. He is noticeable for his frankness, integrity and trust in his colleagues and he does not easily loose his courage; only a sudden change of plans can upset him as he does not like unstable and fast changing situations.

Since he needs stable structures, he tries to construct such. Give him a decision and he will produce a schedule, give him a group of persons and a goal and he will produce a organizational diagram. He works efficient, systematic and methodical but from time to time a bit inflexible. He is not open to speculative, flimsy ideas not directly related to the task in his hand. At the same time hi is most likely committed to adjust and adapt his plans so they fit into the overall plans and established systems.

The Organiser can have a very competitive attitude in relation to status in the group with can be harmful in situations in which they are expressed negatively non-constructive critique to proposals made by other group members. Normally he is close to the group's point of balance. If somebody is in doubt to as what was decided and what he was expected to do he will turn to the Organiser to find out.

The Resource Investigator (or "Contact creator")
Characteristics: Stabile, dominant, extrovert.
The Resource Investigator is perhaps the most sympathetic member of the group at first sight. He/she is relaxed, social and entertaining and his interest is easily turned on. His answers have a tendency to be positive and enthusiastic but he has a tendency to but things aside as fast as he engages in them.

The Resource Investigator is the member of the group that goes outside the group to get information, ideas and contacts. He easily gets new friends and has lots of external contacts. He is rarely in his office, and when there he probably is on the phone most of the time. He is the salesman, the diplomat, the connexion constantly looking for new opportunities in the world outside. His ability to stimulate ideas and encourage new ways of thinking give many people a wrong impression that he is in fact an idea creator himself, but he does not possess the radical originality that defines the Idea Generator; despite this he has an eye for the relevance of new ideas.

Without the stimuli of other persons the Resource Investigator is bored and working on his own makes him bored, demoralised and inefficient. But in the team he is the improviser, performing well under pressure, but can also get too relaxed when he loosens up. He can forget to pursue the assignments he took in a period of enthusiasm. His many and varied interests outside the group can – just as the Idea Generator – make him spend too much time doing irrelevant things that has his attention. Never the less he play the must vital part in the team when it comes to avoid stagnation, going cold and loosing contact to the outside world.

The Communicator (or "Team Worker")
Characteristics: Stabile, extrovert, low dominance.
The Communicator is the most sensitive in the group. He is the one that knows most on the different individual needs and mood of the team and the one that first spot the emotional situation in the group. He is also the one who knows most about the private life of the other team members. He is the active person when it comes to internal communication in the group, sympathetic, popular and the fundament of the team. He

is loyal to the team (which does not refrain him from choosing side in a conflict). If somebody produces and idea he will instinctively develop it is stead of breaking it down or producing a competitive idea. He is a good and patient listener and communicates freely inside the group and encourages others to do the same. As representative for harmony and unity he is a counterbalance to the disharmony created by the Initiator and the Idea Generator and from time to time by the Analyst. He particularly despises a personal conflict and has a tendency to avoid it personally and cool it down for others.

When the team is under pressure or in a difficult situation the sympathy, understanding, loyalty and support is particularly appreciated. His dislike of competition and avoidance to conflicts can make him seem soft and undetermined, but makes him a permanent force working towards unification of the team. He is an outstanding member of the team and even though his individual contributions to the team under normal circumstances not seem so important as the other team roles, the presence of the Communicator is really remarkable when he is not there, in particular in periods with stress and pressure.

The Finisher (or "Completer")
Characteristics: Worried, introvert
The Finisher worries about what can go wrong. He has no rest before personally having controlled every detail and made sure that everything is done and nothing is overlooked. It is not as he is overly scrupulous or pernickety his obsessions is an expression of worry.

The Finisher is not an obstinate member of the group but he constantly has a sense of urge as he communicates to the other team members by encouraging them to activity. He has self control and strength of character and is impatient and intolerant towards the more relaxed members of the group.

If the Finisher has one great worry then it's order. He complies with all time limits and follow the plan. I he does not take care he can become a overly concerned and depressing member of the team and can loose sight of the overall goals of the group by sinking into little details. Never the less his ability to follow through is an invaluable asset to the team.

The Specialist
A ninth team role has been suggested: the Specialist. The specialist is a dedicated, single-minded person with knowledge and skills in rare supply. He contributes only on a narrow front and dwell on technicalities.

Putting the team together
To name team roles as we have done it here gives the impression that they have been defined from the very beginning and that one personality possess the elements on one team role only. This is not true and as mentioned before one person typically has a preferred team role but can "play" other roles as well.

The mentioned 8 team roles are identified through intense research and if one of the roles are missing the team will be weakened, just as the presence on many of the same type will lead to predictable failures. E.g. if a team has too many Idea Generators the many good ideas will never be matured and used. A team consisting of Idea Generators and Initiators will at first sight look splendid but will in the long run be beaten by a combination of less sparkling members of a well balanced team.

The question naturally arises: what if there are less than 8 persons in a team? The answer seems to be that in the same way people has secondary team roles, they can play more than one role and in this way complement each other. You can in other words have an efficient team with just 4 members.

Introvert/Extrovert
Looking more closely at the eight roles you see that they are divided into two groups of four. One group who's activities and orientation is diverted outside the team and one group of team members who's main occupation is the world inside the group.

Outside the team (extrovert)	**Inside the team** (introvert)
Coordinator	Organiser
Idea Generator	Analyst
Resource Investigator	Communicator
Initiator	Finisher

Dominance
It is also important to notice that it is the team members looking to the outside if the team that are most dominant in the psychometrical tests, whereas the team members that are looking inside the group, without being underdogs, are characterized by a low dominance. You can also see the list as four pairs inside the team. Coordinator & Organiser, Idea Generator & Analyst, etc. that play a key role in the different phases of a project work.

Representation of all team roles in a team
It must be emphasized that the composition of successful team not always requires all roles to be represented. If for example a team has to monitor a relative stable process without significant need for new ideas the Idea Generator and Analyst are less important to have represented. On the other hand to a group operating in area with constant changing environment this pair is essential to the success of the group.

Most often groups are formed on the basis of other parameters than the members preferred team roles. Knowledge on the strengths and weaknesses of the group by analysing the team role profile of the group can prove very valuable in order to know in which phases of a work process the group has to be extra careful to keep performing and become successful.

Initiator

Characteristics

- Extremely motivated with a wealth of nervous energy
- Great need for obtaining results
- Aggressively extrovert with drive
- Challenges others
- Aims at winning
- Guides and pushes others to action
- Finds a way out when meeting obstacles

Function

- Creates action
- Makes motion in a team
- Rises above political complications
- Good, when changes are needed
- Does not mind making unpopular decisions
- Tries to form/mark group discussions and activities

Verbal Indicators

- Just do it!
- When you say yes I trust you to do it
- Let's get started
- I want it done yesterday
- Answer, yes or no

Weaknesses

- May be impatient and obstinate
- Sometimes lacks good human understanding
- Inclined to be easily provoked
- May have quite a violent temper

Coordinator

Characteristics

- Feels best with responsibility for diverse people
- Feels best with colleagues of own age/level
- Tackles problems quietly and peacefully

Function

- Makes others work towards a common goal
- Delegates maturely and with confidence
- Exploits individual talents in the group to the benefit for the common goat

Verbal indicators

- Let's keep the course
- Anybody else who has a comment?
- Let's give him/her a chance
- To delegate well is an art
- Management is to obtain results through others

Weaknesses

- Tendency to manipulate
- May be a builder of empires
- Is not necessarily the most knowledgeable in the team but is broadly oriented towards the surrounding world

2.9

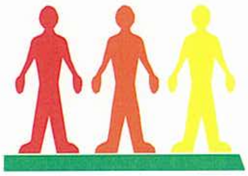
Communicator

Characteristics
- Supports others
- Mild, sociable
- Cares for others
- Shows great flexibility and adapts to the situation
- Quick and sharp observing
- Social and diplomatic
- Good listener
- Popular team/group member

Verbal indicators
- Friendliness does not cost anything
- You made a good point there
- Do you agree?
- He is not so bad/he has his good sides
- I sense a good atmosphere here

Function
- Prevents problem from arising between group members
- Makes all members contribute actively
- Makes a point of avoiding frictions
- Makes things go smoothly
- Improves morals
- People cooperate better when he/she is present

Weaknesses
- May be indecisive in critical situations



Contact Creator

Characteristics
- Enthusiastic
- Quick reactions
- Communicates with everybody
- Born negotiator
- Develops contacts
- Develops further on others' ideas
- Assesses possibilities and sees what can be done
- Relaxed and curious
- Extrovert

Verbal indicators
- We can make a fortune on this
- We don't have to re-invent the wheel
- I will make a call and find out!
- We "steal" the ideas that we can
- The possibilities arise from the others' failures

Function
- Explores ideas, developments and resources from the outside
- Establishes external contacts
- Conducts subsequent negotiations
- Collects information from others

Weaknesses
- Talks a lot
- Enthusiasm fades quickly if he/she is not constantly stimulated

Idea Generator

Characteristics
- Initiates things
- Inventor
- Creative
- Independent
- Unorthodox
- Reacts strongly
- Introvert

Verbal indicators
- Each problem has a solution
- The bigger the problem, the greater the challenge
- Do not disturb, the genius is working
- Good ideas always sound crazy
- Ideas begin with dreams

Function
- Creates new proposals
- Solves complicated problems
- Good when starting up a project
- Good when a project is stuck
- Fights for his/hers ideas

Weaknesses
- Not always realistic as to the practicability of the ideas
- Has difficulties with communication with people on another wavelength

Analyst

Characteristics
- Serious
- Thinks rationally and is not over-enthusiastic
- Slow to make decisions
- Prefers to think things over
- Has a very critical sense
- Makes sharp observations on the basis of all factors
- Is rarely wrong

Verbal indicators
- I think we should sleep on it
- Have we checked all possibilities?
- That is not logical!
- I would rather make my decision on a safe basis (facts, not opinions)
- Let us see the alternatives
- Never make intuitive decisions

Function
- Analyses problems
- Evaluates ideas and propositions
- Weighs the pros and cons

Weaknesses
- Is sometimes experienced as critical and skeptical
- Is sometimes experienced as uninspiring
- May seem dry and cantankerous to outsiders

2.11

Finisher

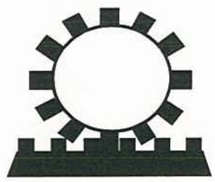
Characteristics
- Capability to carry a project all the way through
- Sees the details
- Does not initiate things he/she cannot carry through
- Is motivated by an inner anxiety (often unaffected on the outside)
- Does not need much stimulus from the outside
- Is typically introvert

Verbal indicators
- This demands the full attention of everybody
- Always read the small print
- That is no excuse
- Perfect just isn't good enough
- Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong, but as O'Toole said: "Murphy was an optimist"

Function
- Good at tasks demanding concentration and accuracy
- Gives the team an impression of how important the project is
- Good at keeping time schedules
- Strives to achieve a high standard
- Notices the details

Weaknesses
- Intolerant towards others that act thoughtlessly
- Does not like to delegate
- Prefers to tackle the tasks himself
- Tendency to worry unnecessarily

Organiser



Characteristics
- Has a practical sense
- Has common sense
- Has self-control and self-confidence
- Prefers systematic hard work and problem solving
- Loyalty and interests lie within the company
- Less occupied with own personal goals

Verbal indicators
- If it can be done, we'll do it
- Action speaks louder!
- Nobody died from working a bit
- Difficult things are dealt with immediately – miracles take a little longer!
- The company has my full and undivided support

Function
- Reliability creates security
- Solves tasks efficiently
- Senses what is realizable
- Does what needs to be done

Weaknesses
- Sometimes lacks intuition
- May show signs of lacking flexibility
- Reacts slowly to new possibilities
- Adapts slowly to changes

2.12

Team Roles

Role	Typical Traits	Qualities	Weaknesses
Organiser	Stable, conscientious, predictable	Ability to organise, practical sense, hard working, self discipline	Lacking flexibility, often rejects untested ideas
Coordinator	Sure of him-/herself, dominant, restrained, calm	Able to treat all collaborators acc. to merit without prejudice. Strongly goal-oriented	Tendency to cling to what is sure. Not very creative
Initiator	Agitated, dynamic, dominant, involved, eager	Energy and will. Fiery soul	Tendency to be provoked or irritated. Impatient
Idea generator	Individualist, inventive, unorthodox, holistic	Fantasy, intellect, knowledge, originality	A little in the clouds, tendency to ignore details and procedures
Contact creator	Enthusiastic, curious, communicative, relaxed	Able to contact other people and to explore everything new. Able to react to challenge	Tendency to lose interest when the first excitement has gone
Analyst	Objective, impartial, careful	Ability to judge, precautious	Finds it difficult to inspire or motivate others. Long decision making process
Communicator	Sociably oriented, kind, sensitive, good communication	Able to react to other people and situation and to stimulate the group/team spirit	Lacking determination in situations of crisis
Finisher	Careful, orderly, conscientious, observes time and schedules	Able to carry things through, oriented on details, systematic	Tendency to worry about minor things. Reluctant against "letting go"

2.13

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY: NEW THINKING AT WORK

Sherene Zolno

Abstract: Many of us have been taught that legitimate knowledge derives from an emphasis on what is rational, objective, empirical, and problematic. Called 'critical thinking,' this ability to identify and successfully solve problems is viewed in most workplace settings as crucial for organizational effectiveness and change. Other means of understanding reality – "appreciation," "valuing," and "affirming," – are considered *Pollyannish*, i.e., soft-headed and non-essential.

By legitimizing only the first form of thinking we shut down an entire mode of *learning* and severely limit the capacity for innovative approaches to organizing and change. A new and inclusive philosophy and approach, however, legitimizes the second form of thinking and facilitates positive organizational change. By connecting people to the organization's strategy, capturing their imaginations, respecting their contributions, and energizing the change process, this approach, called *Appreciative Inquiry*, enables organizational members to increase their influence on their organization's structure and nature.

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WHAT IS APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY?

David Kolb (1984), in his theory of experiential learning, describes the importance of both *appreciative apprehension* and *critical comprehension* as different processes of knowing. Critical comprehension is based on skepticism and doubt, while appreciative apprehension is based on belief, trust and conviction.

One mistake we make is to define "appreciative" in a limited way as meaning only "gratitude." Appreciative also includes the meanings "to see" (where you pay attention), "to value" and "to increase in value." When Kolb says, "Appreciation is the process of valuing," he is reminding us that it takes more than just the facts to make effective choices about the world.

> *"Appreciation of an apprehended moment is a judgment of both value and fact. To appreciate apprehended reality is to embrace it. And from this affirmative embrace flows a deeper fullness and richness of experience."*
>
> *–David Kolb*[1]

David Cooperrider (Srivastva & Cooperrider, 1990), of Case Western Reserve University, who is one of the original developers of Appreciative Inquiry, describes it as engaging people in "...an inquiry process that tries to apprehend the factors that give life to a living system." Based on information derived from the inquiry, people would then "seek to articulate those possibilities that can lead to a better future."[2] The Appreciative Inquiry process as he has presented it, is about finding ways to successfully translate best intentions into reality, and values and beliefs into practice.

> *"It is important to recognize that the problem-solving method of organizational inquiry quite systematically paints a picture of organizational life in which a whole series of colors are considered untouchable. In this way, the totality of being is obviously obscured, leading to a narrowed conception of human nature and cultural possibility."* *–David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva*[2]

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In other words, the expected outcome of the Appreciative Inquiry is an organization which has affirmed its strengths and fundamental values, used that information to engage in a process to envision a collectively desired future, and moved forward towards enacting that vision in daily worklife.

PROBLEM SOLVING VS. APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Because it is highly counter-intuitive in Western culture, it's difficult to understand how affirming strengths and values can lead to transformational change. In fact, most leaders would feel remiss if they failed to engage in a rational process using problem-solving methods to identify ways to improve the cost effectiveness of internal systems. We need to question, however, whether problem solving has already fixed that which is *solvable*, and begin to focus on what is yet *possible* – the untapped potential beyond fixing what's already in place.

Carl Jung, early 20th Century psychological researcher and therapist, noticed that a person's problems faded when they were confronted with a new or stronger interest. He asserted that the greatest and most important problems in life were fundamentally unsolvable and could only be outgrown (Jung 1923).

For Jung, Cooperrider and others, problem solving appeared inherently conservative, limiting and slow. The philosophy and approach they sought to introduce instead focused on the future of the system as a whole, on engaging participants in collectively imagining new possibilities for their future, and on bypassing the process of solving yesterday's problems.

Thomas White, President of GTE Telephone Operations, expressed his concerns with the limits of problem solving by asking this question: "Should we demoralize a successful group by concentrating on their failures, or help them over the remaining hurdles by building a bridge with their successes?" He felt that using Appreciative Inquiry helped GTE attain much better results than just trying to fix problems – that by shifting their internal conversation away from its focus on negative problems and toward valuing their capabilities, the re-energized organization improved financial results beyond what was expected with traditional problem solving alone (White, 1996).

> *"We are among the best problem solvers in the world. We trouble shoot everything. When used continually and over a long period of time, however, this approach can lead to a negative culture. If you combine a negative culture with all the challenges we face today, it could be easy to convince ourselves that we have too many problems to overcome––to slip into a paralyzing sense of hopelessness."*
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> *–Thomas White - President, GTE Telephone Operations*

2 Reprinted from W.A. Passmore and R. W. Woodman, Research in Organizational Change and Development, copyright 1987, with permission from Elsevier Science.

Table 1 identifies some of the differences between problem solving, and Appreciative Inquiry.

As many organizational leaders are far from achieving the results they want, the need to reinvent the tools used in helping them is clear. The choice appears to be to stay in the incremental problem based, diagnosis/treatment frame, or to move on to a fresh perspective which can simultaneously address the compelling triad of strategy, structure and culture during change.

The Appreciative Inquiry process makes available a whole new array of alternatives to support organizational learning and expand possibilities for action. Using it, change leaders have an opportunity to reframe their philosophical stance in a fundamental way-- that is, during organizational improvement efforts, to be deliberately *appreciative*. They would thus be working with optimism and hope, actively

Table 1 Problem Solving vs. Appreciative Inquiry

PROBLEM SOLVING	APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY
Identification of the problem	Setting a context of appreciation of (seeing) what is
Analysis of Causes "What's going on"	Inquiry: Discovery Phase "Valuing the best of what is"
Proposed Solutions "Fix the problem at hand"	Envisioning: Dream Phase "What might be"
Action Planning "How to get it done"	Dialoguing/Aligning: Design Phase "This is what will be"
Action "Fix the problem"	Innovating: Destiny Phase "Creating and sustaining it now"
BASIC ASSUMPTIONS . . .	
Problem Solving: That the organization is a problem to be solved	Appreciative Inquiry: That the organization is a mystery to be embrace

engaged in valuing and celebrating the human spirit, while creating an enspirited environment welcoming to creativity and imagination.

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Suggestion for structure and content of group-log

1 Vision, Aims and Objectives
- Project sub-objectives
- Official aims and objectives (study-plan)
- Group objectives

2 AC
- AC (within group)
- AC (between group and advisors)
- Other agreements

3 Meetings (agenda+minutes)
- Meetings (internal)
- Meetings with advisor
- Meetings with others

4 Project-plans etc.
- Activity-plan
- Ressource-plan
- Social/personal calendar

5 Working-papers and log-papers
- WP ab advisors
- WP to advisors
- WP (intern)
- LP

6 Analyses, experiments and visits

7 Report (parts) ready for print

8 References
- Reference-list
- Critique of the sources

9 Status-report
- Own status-report + comments from opponents and advisors
- Status-report from other group + our comments

10 Communication
- Internal (process-reflections; conflict resolution; diary; etc.)
- External (letters, mails; etc.)

11 Other
- Project-description
-

4.1

The Essence of Management Series

The Essence of International Money
The Essence of Strategic Management
The Essence of The Economy
The Essence of Statistics for Business
The Essence of Personal Microcomputing
The Essence of Marketing Research
The Essence of Management Accounting
The Essence of Information Systems
The Essence of Successful Staff Selection
The Essence of Financial Accounting
The Essence of Organizational Behaviour
The Essence of Effective Communication
The Essence of Quality Management
The Essence of Services Marketing
The Essence of Marketing
The Essence of International Marketing
The Essence of Business Economics
The Essence of Industrial Marketing
The Essence of Financial Management
The Essence of International Business
The Essence of Operations Management
The Essence of Mergers and Acquisitions
The Essence of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management
The Essence of Women in Management
The Essence of Business Law
The Essence of Venture Capital

5.1

The Essence of Effective Communication

Ron Ludlow
Fergus Panton

Prentice Hall
New York London Toronto Sydney Tokyo Singapore

(1993)

- poor working environment
- lack of promotion opportunities
- no challenge in the job
- no rewards for achievement etc.

The interview should be carried out on problem-solving lines, and requires considerable skills to elicit the information from the employee, who may be aggrieved with you and the organization. Therefore:

- Put the leaver at ease.
- Keep an open mind.
- Ask open-ended questions, but never argue or advise.
- Listen to:
  what the person wants to say; what he/she does not want to say; and what he/she cannot say without help.
- Mirror or reflect the leaver's views: clarify, summarize, but do not twist or add to what he/she says.
- Go at the leaver's own speed.
- Keep the process going, even in the face of anxiety or hostility.
- Learn to recognize and accept your own feelings – do not try to escape from them, but learn to deal with them and those of the leaver sensitively.

SUMMARY

We have identified that, in any interview situation, the objective of the interview must be known and understood by both parties. Interview success will occur only if suitable preparation is made by the interviewer and interviewee, rapport established early in the interview, and control exercised by the effective use of questions by the interviewer. Guidelines have been given for managers dealing with specific incidents and situations at work.

Here's to your next interview!

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Making presentations

'Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?' he asked. 'Begin at the beginning', the King said, gravely, 'and go on till you come to the end: then stop.'

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*

INTRODUCTION

This advice was given to the White Rabbit, and in many ways it is exactly the advice needed when considering the making of a presentation. How you begin, what comes in the middle and how you end probably does not seem as simple as the King's advice, but the following chapter will provide you with the necessary information to enable you to give an effective speech or presentation.

The purposes for making presentations are many, but can be grouped in the following way:

1. To demonstrate: a service, product, system.
2. To create: an image, strategy.
3. To entertain: colleagues, outside people.
4. To sell: a concept, product, idea.
5. To represent: a group, company, department.
6. To promote: an attitude, a way of working.
7. To suggest: a solution, a new concept.

No matter what the reason for the presentation, it should always be remembered that what you are consistently seeking is the promotion of better communication, the most professional standards of presentation, and the commitment to greater awareness of the needs of others.

However good you are on your feet, you are unlikely to be successful unless you have prepared thoroughly. For any presentation, the first thing to consider is, 'What are my objectives?' Be sure you know why you are making the presentation and what you want from it. When structuring the presentation, check that the basic steps help you achieve the overall objective.

There are five stages to consider for a successful presentation:

1. Set your objective.
2. Plan the presentation.
3. Prepare the materials.
4. Rehearse and practise.
5. Be ready and prepared on the day.

No two situations are the same, but whatever the situation, success will not be achieved unless you follow some basic rules and have asked yourself some basic questions. Knowing to whom you are actually making the presentation is one of the most fundamental questions to be asked. Exercise 3.1 deals with a list of questions you should consider when *planning* your presentation.

EXERCISE 3.1 PLANNING

What is your audience's background?
How knowledgeable are they?
What are their strengths and weaknesses?
How can your ideas be of benefit/threat to them?
What should your appearance be?
What is your status in relation to your audience?
Is there some common ground?
What impression do you want to create?
Have all aspects of the idea been considered?
What specific points need emphasizing?
What are the possible objections?
Where will you be required to make the presentation?
What date and what time of day?
How many people will be attending?
Are there other speakers? If so, what will they be speaking about?
Where in the sequence of events do you fit in?
Will you need AVA facilities? Microphone? Can you use a microphone well?
Will you be expected to provide handouts etc.?

Timir.. is an extremely important point. You must know how long you are expe... .o talk so that you can prepare and rehearse what you have to say. It is also good to know at what time of day your presentation is to be made as this will help you to decide what kind of 'mood' the audience is likely to be in.

When rehearsing, you will probably find that you will overrun or underrun, and therefore you can change the structure of your presentation to conform with your allocated time. One guideline you can use is that the introduction and summary should take up only 20 per cent of your presentation time, leaving the other 80 per cent for the main subject matter, as shown in Figure 3.1. Sections A to E in the figure are amplified below:

A. Introduction and objectives, reasons for the presentation (10% of time available).

An introduction should be short, snappy and catch the audience's attention. This is a critical period in which you should be trying to establish a rapport with the audience. They have a choice of listening or not – you must motivate them to want to listen.

B. Introduction of main themes, issues (20% of time available).

Here you identify and explain the basic themes and issues concerning your presentation, the key elements you wish to develop.

C. Development of main themes, issues (40% of time available).

You develop your arguments logically and rationally, showing clearly the relationship between the themes and arguments.

D. Integration of main themes, issues (20% of time available).

Here you pull together the main themes of your presentation. Do not introduce any new themes at this stage – it will only lead to confusion.

E. Summary or conclusion (10% of time available).

The message you want to leave with the audience is encapsulated here. You must be clear what your objectives are, to ensure that the message, the reason for giving the presentation, gets across. Summarize the main points; pull together all loose ends; and stress the way in which your argument leads to your required conclusion. End on a high note – and thank the audience for listening: they did not have to, even if they were coerced into attending!

You will need to consider the *facilities* – where you will be making your presentation, how the room will be set out – and what *equipment* is available at

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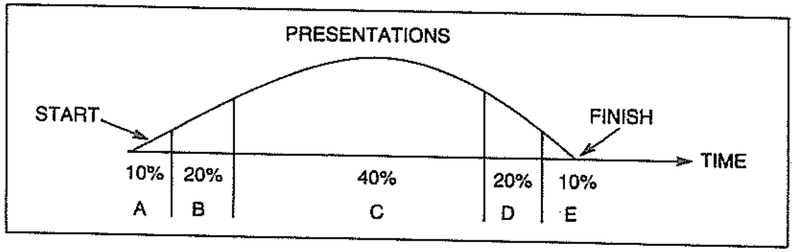

Figure 3.1 Structuring a presentation

the venue, and whether the equipment you wish to use can be used effectively in the room allocated. Showing OHP slides on a wall with a fairly bold pattern is not conducive to good attention or the credibility of the presenter!

Make sure that your presentation suits the audience to whom you are presenting, and make sure that there is adequate formality for the individual groups. Do not assume that what is good enough for a small group of colleagues will work just as effectively with a group of fifty people from all other departments within your organization.

Preparation

David Niven once said, when making a speech, 'Tonight I feel like Zsa Zsa Gabor's fifth husband. I know what to do but how do I make it interesting?'

In any presentation, it is only you the speaker who know the exact nature of the material you are about to deliver. To ensure that you get the information across in the best manner you need to consider the following points:

1. It is vitally important that you research and prepare the information. Once you have decided what you want to communicate, you need to collect all the information required to do the job effectively. A great deal of the information will already be stored in your mind, so that should be written down first, and then other details added as you acquire the additional data.
2. The information should be presented in a logical and sequential manner to ensure that the audience understand the events, are

able to reach some solution to the problem, or are left with a clear understanding of the reason for the presentation. A natural order to your presentation makes listening easier for the audience and makes the presentation easier to remember.

3. It is necessary to give all the required information, as gaps tend to present problems. If the presentation is difficult to follow because of the lack of information, the audience will lose the thread of the message and lose interest. It is often said that a presentation is like a string of beads, with the beads linked by a logical thread.
4. The opening and closing section of the presentation are as important as the middle part. Bob Monkhouse, in his book *Just Say a Few Words*, says that 'in the beginning is the hook . . . the means of grabbing the crowd.' A striking introduction is a useful way to achieve a good presentation, providing that the rest of the material follows suit. The opening statement should say what you want to communicate and the closing statement should be a summary so that everyone is clear about what you have achieved.

EXERCISE 3.2 PREPARATION CHECKLIST

When you have planned your presentation, examine the following:

1. Objectives: recheck that you have defined your objective correctly.
2. Structure: does your presentation have a clearly identifiable structure?
3. Content: is all said that needs saying?
4. Sequence: is it logical? Are all links and summaries appropriate?
5. Time: is sufficient time available for all you want to say?
6. Balance: is each section weighted correctly? Check the priorities of your arguments and facts.
7. Conclusion: does it make people sit up and agree with you? Is it punchy?
8. Objectives: do all the above work towards achieving your objectives?

Practice and rehearsal are essential if you wish to develop the necessary skills to be a good presenter. Some people prefer to practise away from everyone else, in a distant room with just a mirror to

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represent the audience, whereas others will perform to a sympathetic friend/colleague/spouse and require some constructive criticism. Another method is to tape the presentation and to listen to it a few times, thus allowing you to make any necessary or desirable changes.

When you are rehearsing, don't do your presentation sub-vocally, or simply read it in your mind. You must recite it, stop where you have problems and start again from there. If you do not speak it aloud, your timing will be all wrong. Remember also that it will take longer on the day, so do not try to cram too much into the time available.

EXERCISE 3.3 DEVELOPING PRESENTATION SKILLS

Prepare a short presentation to last five minutes. Your audience are your colleagues, and the subject matter is about something that you have a deep interest in or about which you hold a strong conviction.

Tape your presentation and listen to it, making notes about changes you would make. Leave the tape for a few days and listen to it again, making any new changes you feel you wish to make. Ask a friend or colleague to listen and make comments.

Compare notes and then repeat the taping, making all changes you and your colleague have suggested.

When making the actual presentation you must be aware of the attitudes you may have to face and the techniques you can use to help you make the best presentation you can.

Where attitudes are concerned you must have a good understanding of your audience, their motivations and their perceptions of you. The types of audience you may be faced with are: your superiors; your colleagues; your team; a mixed audience; a hostile audience; an international audience.

Your superiors: although this may sound a little daunting, you have the expertise, a given amount of time and the knowledge that they need to know about the content of your presentation. To ensure a good presentation you must be thoroughly prepared, accurate, concise, positive, honest and assertive.

Your colleagues: it is possible that this audience could prove to be one of your most difficult. In many organizations there is a certain amount of rivalry between departments. They may resent any ideas or changes that you are presenting to them. In this situation you should strive to be prepared and know the facts, be natural and assertive, avoid aggressive statements and being overly protective towards your own

department, and know you. strengths and work to them rather than trying to oversell the points you are making.

Your team: they will probably behave differently in a formal situation than in normal day-to-day business meetings. They will certainly expect that any presentation should show preparation, knowledge, authority and confidence. If you treat your team with friendliness and sincerity, you should be able to present ideas to them in an informal, intelligent and, possibly, an entertaining way.

A mixed audience: the 'what, why and how' audience, because often you are not aware of what they already know, what they actually want to hear, why they have been invited to the presentation and how, if at all, they relate to each other. Thus you may be unsure about the level at which to pitch your presentation, what amount of knowledge to assume, what kind of language to use, and from what particular angle to approach the subject. Consider the following:

1. Keep things simple, explicit, clear (the 'Kiss' syndrome – Keep It Simple Stupid!).
2. Avoid jargon, private jokes or in-words.
3. Allow the audience to know that you know that they are from various backgrounds and that some of your presentation may be familiar to some of them.
4. Create a sense of common purpose.
5. Try to present your material from different angles.

A hostile audience: you may be faced with this kind of audience for many reasons and the audience could either be people you know well or hardly at all. Knowing the subject thoroughly and having all the vital information as back-up material will prove invaluable. If you use the time allocated to the full, you will find that it will be appreciated by the audience regardless of their feelings about the content.

An international audience: 'any effective speaker must learn to adapt a talk according to the expectations of his audience', states Robert Moran in an article entitled 'Tips on making speeches to international audiences'. He lists many cultural differences to be taken into consideration: Japanese audiences look for sincerity through an indirect approach with ambiguities throughout and a careful exploration of inner meanings; French audiences need statements to be substantiated and opinions supported with numbers and facts; Americans favour practical questions to explore how things work in practice; German audiences tend to focus on technical aspects, so all figures

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must be exact; Swedish audiences tend to pose theoretical questions and seek to define the strategies mentioned in the presentation.

All the points mentioned return to the fact that you must find out all you can about your audience. You want their explicit agreement to listen and you have to use your personality, your introduction to the subject and your preparation to ensure that this is gained. In agreeing to listen they admit that you probably have something worthwhile to say. Where it is appropriate, involve them in the communication by participation: inviting questions, ideas and views from your audience.

Being enthusiastic about the subject of your presentation will often be passed on to your audience. Some people believe that enthusiasm, like laughter, is infectious. The important point is that the person who really believes in what he or she is saying, and enjoys it, will instil the same feeling in the listener.

Be sincere: if an audience feels that the information being presented is not complete or is misleading, then its response may be to take the opposite viewpoint. You should believe in the information you are presenting. Making eye contact with your audience is one way to present a sincere image, providing that you do not glare consistently at one person or at one side of the audience. Moving your eyes around the audience will make everyone feel involved.

If you are not used to making presentations, you may be tempted to copy someone else's style. However, there is only one Tom Peters, and although his presentation style can be described as 'bizarre', only he could carry it off so well. You must use your own natural abilities and skills and be yourself. Be natural and straightforward and that will work for you in the most positive way.

Presentation techniques

The techniques which can help to ensure a successful presentation are concerned with: the words you use; your appearance; the use of your voice; body language; using notes; visual aids; and answering questions.

The words you use

It is often said that no matter how good the presentation may be, or how smart and attractive your appearance, or how dynamic your visual aids, it is, in the final analysis, what you say that actually matters.

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Words are the main vehicle for making your communication, so your objective should be to talk clearly, concisely, intelligibly and in an enthusiastic, interesting and motivating way.

Visual aids are important to enhance the points you are making, but you should also try to create the image through your use of words. Use examples, analogies and word pictures to give interesting and graphic illustrations to your points. Most people are able to visualize and understand more easily from an example than from a technical description.

EXAMPLE 3.1

At a presentation on the benefits of a training course which used video as a means of enhancing future performances, the presenter stated accurately that 'the course uses video to aid personal presentation skills'. The reaction was one of mild interest. When he looked at his own presentation and talked to colleagues about improving his performance, he realized that he needed to be more enthusiastic. The next time he was 'selling' the course he changed his statement to 'the video is used effectively. You can actually see yourself perform as others really see you!' This conjured up the image in everyone's brain of actually performing and watching afterwards.

Avoid the use of expressions like 'um', 'er', 'you know', 'you see'. Many of us use these without really being aware, but they can be distracting, especially if they are used excessively. If you do use any of these constantly then you must make every effort to stop using them. Instead, pause and collect your thoughts, look at your notes, take a deep breath. Any of these would be more acceptable to your audience.

Talking to people who do not have the same amount of expertise as yourself means that the words you use should be jargon-free and free from all technical terms which are likely to be unknown. You should also avoid slang and colloquialisms as these are often open to misinterpretation. The audience is not there to unravel verbal puzzles, so keep your words simple and easy to understand.

Your appearance

People make instant assumptions from the visual contacts they make. You will not necessarily be judged by your appearance, but how your presentation is received will be determined by how you present yourself. Points to consider are:

—you should be dressed comfortably which means avoiding tight-fitting, brand-new and heavy clothing.

—whatever you decide to wear should be right for the occasion. Jeans and jumper would not be a good idea when making a presentation to potential clients, and a formal dinner suit or evening gown may be too extreme for the afternoon presentation to a society group.

—make sure that whatever you wear is neat, tidy and clean. Making the time to check on your appearance just before you start your presentation can alert you to any problems.

—try not to wear anything which could prove to be too distracting, or perfume or aftershave which is too overpowering.

—if you are the type of person who fidgets with 'things' then avoid having anything about your person which will encourage the habit!

The use of your voice

The way you use your voice can help to put across a controlled, interesting, rational and comprehensive message. The points you should consider are: volume, tone, pitch, speed, and breathing.

Volume: the first aim of any speaker is to be heard, so adapt the loudness of your voice to the size of the audience, the size and acoustic qualities of the room and the emphasis you wish to use on certain words. You do not have to shout to be understood, but speaking up allows you to communicate more clearly.

Tone: speaking in a monotone is very boring to the listener. You can use your tone for emphasis, effect and to signal a break or link. When you raise your voice slightly, you appear to be increasing the intensity of feeling that you put into those particular words. Speaking more softly will tend to increase audience concentration.

Pitch: changing the pitch of your voice often indicates to the audience that you have finished with one particular point and that you are about to go on to the next. Pitch change can also give a dramatic effect.

Speed: speaking at one constant speed can be as off-putting as talking in a monotone. You will need to practise speeding up and slowing down as you speak. It is better if you can begin your presentation slowly because you will speed up as you get into your presentation. A pause can be used to good effect because it can create anticipation

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and encourage attention. The summaries should be done slowly, remembering that for most of the people the information is new and therefore they need time to absorb it.

Breathing: nervousness can cause your breathing to be irregular and erratic. It is a good exercise for your own self-confidence to know that you are quite capable of getting through your longest paragraph without gasping at the end. Should you find that you are getting short of breath, you will become more nervous, flustered and getting more short of breath which will make you more nervous . . . . If you should find that this is happening, then it is better to take an unscheduled deep breath than to flounder on.

EXERCISE 3.4 THE USE OF YOUR VOICE

Look back at your last presentation when you are preparing for your next one, and consider:

1. Is your voice boring?
2. Do you speak in a monotone, or vary your pitch?
3. Is the speed of your delivery constant? Varied?
4. Do you drop your voice at the end of a sentence?
5. Is your breathing right? Do you run out of breath in the middle of a sentence? (It's probably too long then!)
6. How do you make a point or emphasize a key issue? Do you raise your voice? Do you speak more slowly? More quickly? Do you repeat it?
7. Do you use long words? Short words? Long sentences? Why? When?
8. Are your words within the vocabulary of your audience? Do they understand you?
9. After your next presentation, ask a friend in the audience for constructive feedback on the above points.

Body language

The use of non-verbal communication can lead to greater effectiveness. To counteract the nervousness that you will probably feel, stand straight and tall. You will not only look confident, but you will feel more confident also. Make sure that you do not slouch, that you do not exaggerate movements which will prove to be distracting and that you can control any habits that others would find intolerable. Do not be afraid to use gestures, but do make sure that they are natural. Watching yourself on a video can highlight many of these points.

Your facial expressions will be mirrored by your audience. If you look serious your audience will feel the same and reflect that feeling back to you. If you find it difficult to use gestures and still feel natural, try to let your feeling and your meaning be mirrored in your expression. This will make it easier for your audience to relate to your message. A dead-pan expression is very off-putting, so it is important to remember to smile! A smile will bring warmth to your presentation and will also help to create a friendly atmosphere and rapport with your audience.

EXERCISE 3.5 YOUR BODY LANGUAGE

How do you use your body to communicate during a presentation?

1. Do you talk to the audience, or to the screen behind you?
2. Do you actively seek eye contact with specific members of the audience? Do you sweep over them or fix them beadily in the eye?
3. Do you know who the decision makers are, and speak primarily to them?
4. Do you tend to concentrate on looking to the right or left, to the front or back of the audience?
5. Are your gestures congruent with your message? Too exaggerated? Are you too stiff?
6. Do you have any distracting mannerisms?
7. Do you point at the audience? Wag your finger?
8. Are your movements simple? Or do you pace like a caged tiger?
9. Are you natural? Are you yourself?
10. Do you create barriers between you and your audience?

5.8

Before you make your next presentation, consider the points above, and how you can best use body language to reinforce your message.

After your next presentation, ask a friend in the audience for feedback on your body language.

Using notes

It is always helpful to have notes on the main points summarized on some sort of card. A good exercise is to start off by writing the whole presentation down, and then as you practise and become more accustomed to the presentation, you can condense it into succinct headings. You must make sure that your notes are legible and can be good indicators of your next point.

Using a different colour pen or a highlighter to alert you to making a change in your tone or pitch, to pause or to make a gesture, will help with the final presentation. These points can only be made by recording your presentation and listening to it and making the changes where necessary. Do not use floppy sheets of A4 paper for your notes: put them on to small cards which you can hold in one hand and refer to, and make sure you have them in the correct sequence before you start. Number the cards, and tie them together with a piece of string through the top left hand corners. If you don't, and you drop the loose cards, you'll never find your sequence again!

Visual aids

They are as they suggest, an aid to communication. They must be relevant, simple and bold. You do have options when presenting things by means of aids. In particular:

- You do not *have* to use audio or visual aids.
- Try to assess the value of all the aids you can use before making your decision.
- If you mix your media try to match the various formats.
- Ask yourself why you want to use aids and what you hope to achieve.

When aids are used properly they can arouse interest, show visually things that are difficult to describe verbally, focus interest on key points, and provide clarity of understanding as the senses are combined to absorb the matter presented. The more interesting you can make your illustrations, the more chance there is that you will capture your audience's attention. Be sure that you restrict the information on each aid to only one point. If there are a number of different points you want to illustrate, use one aid for each.

Be careful that you do not stand in front of your visual aids: your audience cannot see through you! Allow sufficient time for your audience to absorb the information and then remove it from view and go on to the next point.

EXERCISE 3.6 VISUAL AIDS CHECKLIST

1. Do your visual aids reinforce points you have made or are making?
2. Keep quiet while your audience studies the aid – they won't listen until they've read it.
3. When you have made your point with the aid, remove it before you move forward.
4. **When using an OHP:**
   (a) look at the audience, not at the screen – glance at the projector to check where you are;
   (b) to emphasize a point, use a pointer on the projector, not the screen – you'll lose audience contact otherwise;
   (c) make sure everyone can see the screen;
   (d) your writing must be large enough to be legible by the audience at the back;
   (e) make sure the lamp on the OHP is working before you start the presentation, and that you have a spare bulb;
   (f) check your slide is central before switching on;
   (g) turn off OHP between slides;
   (h) make sure your slides are in the correct sequence before the presentation.
5. **When using a whiteboard:**
   (a) check that the available pens are not dry;
   (b) keep your pens in your spare hand, keep them in the same sequence, e.g. black, red, blue, green, and return them to that position when you have used them;
   (c) after using a pen, always replace the cap;

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   (d) try not to turn your back on the audience when writing. Stand to the *right* of your writing, facing the right of your audience, and move towards the left of your audience when writing, exposing the writing as you go.
6. **When using a flipchart:**
   (a) if you have already prepared your flipcharts, make sure they are in the right sequence;
   (b) flipcharts never seem to come apart singly when you want them to: fold up one bottom corner of each – it will make it so much easier;
   (c) if you have not prepared your flipcharts, and you are going to write your message/points as you go, cheat! Write your points faintly in pencil on the chart and then just go over it in pen. This is especially effective when you are drawing a picture or diagram – people will think you are Rolf Harris!
   (d) keep your pens in sequence, as for using a whiteboard.

Answering questions

You must listen to the questions carefully and answer them as straightforwardly as possible. It is rather rude to tell a questioner that the question is stupid or was covered by the presentation. Try to empathize with the person, and realize that you may have to make a point much clearer to answer the particular question.

How you introduce the question session has a large impact on how it will develop. Asking gruffly, 'So, are there any questions?' is likely to deter the audience from participating. If you say pleasantly, 'I am sure that what I have been saying has given you lots of food for thought. I will try to clarify any points about which you are unclear. What are your questions?' is more likely to guarantee a positive response.

Do not be afraid to plant a question if nobody asks one voluntarily after a short time. Once the first hurdle has been overcome, others will not feel so nervous about opening up.

Avoiding the issue will not satisfy the audience, and trying to appear to know something when you do not will not gain any admiration. If you are asked a question and you do not know the answer, it is better to admit your lack of knowledge, but try to find the answer for a later date. Bluffing can work some of the time with some people, but you must be aware of the hidden experts!

EXERCISE 3.7

Using all the ideas presented in this chapter, read through the following two extracts and make notes about tone, emphasis, pitch, etc.

Prepare the two readings and then record your presentation. Get someone else to do the same exercise and then listen to the recordings, making comments about the final result.

What lessons have you learned about your presentation skills from this activity?

Reading 1. From *The Art of War*, by Sun Tzu.

The secret of war lies in the communication. The line of supply may be said to be vital to the existence of an army as the heart to the life of a human being. Just as the duellist who finds his adversary's point menacing him with certain death, and his own guard astray, is compelled to conform to his adversary's movements, and to content himself with warding off his thrusts, so the commander whose communications are suddenly threatened finds himself in a false position, and he will be fortunate if he has not to change all his plans, to split up his force into more or less isolated detachments, and to fight with inferior numbers on ground which he has not had time to prepare, and where defeat will not be an ordinary failure, but will entail the ruin or the surrender of his whole army.

Reading 2. From *How Was It For You?*, by Maureen Lipman.

Now let's talk about oral gratification. There. That made you sit up. Thought you were reading Claire Rayner for a minute, didn't you? I'm referring, of course, to food. Throughout my memorably unmemorable life, I've often stumbled on scenes of anger and chaos whilst attempting to put fork to mouth. I don't just mean family weddings and Boxing Day lunch, either. Though where TV drama would be without such round-the-table carnage, I don't know. Take Dallas (please!). How they manage to force down so much brunch whilst thinking up so much fratricide, genocide and, no doubt, insecticide is beyond me. I reckon the ranch should be called 'Mouthfork'.

EXERCISE 3.8 GIVING THE PRESENTATION: A CHECKLIST FOR FEEDBACK TO THE PRESENTER

A. Introduction

1. Did the introduction make the subject interesting to you?
2. Did you know when the introduction had ended?

B. Voice

1. Sufficient variation of speed?
2. Sufficient variation of volume, pitch, tone?
3. Adequate pauses? Breathing OK?

C. Audience contact

1. Sufficient eye contact?
2. Would every member of the audience understand every word?
3. Any irritating mannerisms?
4. Sufficient enthusiasm shown by you for the subject?

D. Speech content

1. Correct amount of information for time allowed?
2. Did the speech follow a logical order?
3. Were the various facts well balanced?
4. Would more word pictures or analogies have helped?

E. Visual aids

1. Were any visual aids required?
2. If so, what should they have been?

F. Conclusion

1. Did you know when the conclusion had arrived?
2. Was a summary or recap required? If so, was it adequate?
3. Did the conclusion leave you with a message?

SUMMARY

By following the suggestions in this chapter you will feel more confident about making presentations, but a great deal will be learnt from practising and getting feedback from others. There is a saying that 'Experience is a great teacher', to

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which has been added 'the only trouble is, you get the tests before you learn the lessons!'

Before the presentation: plan and prepare.

During the presentation: speak up.

At the end: SHUT UP AND SIT DOWN!

References

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Monkhouse, B. (1988) *Just Say a Few Words*, Lennard Publishing, London.
Moran, R. (1989) 'Tips on making speeches to international audiences', in *International Management*, Reed International, London.
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4

Running meetings/ leading discussions

INTRODUCTION

A very well-known company which produces training films had such a success with a video entitled 'Meetings, Bloody Meetings' that it made a sequel called 'More Bloody Meetings'.

How many times have you had similar thoughts about meetings, with the belief that yet more of your precious time will be wasted sitting through a meeting which is too long, does not concern you, gets nothing done, causes ill feelings between those attending and those who have been left out, etc.?

Yet the general view about meetings, held by many organizations, is that a good meeting, properly handled, will achieve more than each participating member could have done alone and more than could be achieved by exchanging information in some other way. Meetings are not simply a communal or social alternative to memos, letters or phone calls. They can, if handled correctly, produce a dynamic effect which cannot be produced by any other means.

There are two courses of action you can follow if the feelings above are shared by you and your colleagues. You can either stop having meetings at all, or make sure that the meetings you are involved in are more efficiently and effectively run.

The first option should not be considered, but the second option means that you need to understand what meetings are all about, how a meeting should be run, and the behaviour and relationships you are likely to encounter in a meeting situation.

(6.1)

Types of meeting and their implications

Below are listed five types of meeting and a description of each:

1. Negotiating: to resolve some types of conflict. Discussion may be 'two-sided', and the aim will be to bring the two sides together (see Chapter 6).
2. Informing: the flow of information will tend to be only one way. Discussion is discouraged, as it may affect the passing of the information.
3. Solving problems: the creativity of the group should be used so that the problems can be solved. Structure of such a meeting will not be as precise. Discussion will flow around the table.
4. Making decisions: particular members are involved in a decision-making process. The result should be that members are informed of and committed to the decisions made. This type of meeting is fairly well structured.
5. Collecting and exchanging ideas: to present, inform and receive reactions to ideas. This type of meeting encourages discussion and questions.

EXERCISE 4.1 PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

1. Do you need a meeting? Is there some better/cheaper way of achieving your objectives?
2. What is the purpose of the meeting?
   (a) giving instructions?
   (b) bargaining over issues?
   (c) giving advice/counselling?
   (d) making decisions?
   (e) solving problems using others' knowledge and skills?
3. What are your overall objectives?
   (a) what do you want to achieve?
   (b) what are the best/worst results?
   (c) do you have a fallback position/contingency plans?

Perhaps the most difference similarity between these different types

of meeting is the amount of control used by the chairperson to steer the events in the desired direction.

Holding a meeting is expensive in terms of time and cost. There is therefore the need to make sure that a meeting is being held for a very clear reason, that only those who need to attend do so, and that the meeting is planned effectively.

Some of the typical factors which contribute to the failure of a meeting are the following:

1. Inadequate structure: this usually occurs when there is a failure to keep the meeting to its purpose and there are one or two forceful members who dominate the proceedings.
2. Distribution and absorption of information: it may be wrongly assumed that all members will have read and understood all the information circulated prior to the meeting. Distribution of information at the meeting may wrongly assume that all in attendance can read quickly and retain every part of the information.
3. Minutes: inaccuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting leads to valuable time being taken up in the next meeting while points are reconsidered and agreed.
4. Agenda setting: if a meeting is not planned properly, the topics covered will tend to be diverse and to a certain extent time-wasting. It will also mean that some members who are not involved in certain points will lose interest in the whole proceedings.
5. Chairperson: problems associated with the chairperson are that he or she allows too much free discussion, is not clear about the purpose of the meeting or the required conclusion, and allows one or two dominant speakers to the exclusion of everyone else.

CHECKLIST 4.1 PREPARATION

1. Make action plans:
   (a) what are your sub-objectives?
   (b) do they move you forward to achieving your overall objectives?
   (c) what attitude should you adopt in the meeting? How should you approach it?

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2. Prepare the structure of the meeting:
   (a) what should be the content?
   (b) what forms of process should you use?
   (c) how best to use time?
   (d) how can you set the agenda most effectively?
3. How wide are the outcomes acceptable to you?
   (a) if narrow, you want to keep the discussion closed;
   (b) if wide, you can open up the discussion.
4. How committed to the decisions do you want the participants to feel?
   (a) if high commitment is needed, involve the participants in the decision-making process;
   (b) the more control you exert, the less committed the participants will be.

The roles of chairperson and members

In a formal meeting there will be a chairperson, a recorder, and the members. To ensure a successful meeting it is important for them all to work together. All meetings have a formal and informal level because of the personal interests of all the people involved and their personal (sometimes hidden!) agendas.

Responsibilities of the chairperson

The chairperson is responsible for controlling the meeting, clarifying the objectives, handling people's contributions, ensuring a fair distribution of time to all members, ensuring that all members make a contribution and ensuring everyone knows what is expected of them following the meeting. The one thing that a chairperson should not do is to get involved with the content of the task. Responsibilities include:

- Pre-meeting — Clarify and inform about the purpose of the meeting; set the agenda; decide on the members who are needed; decide where the meeting is to be held and the time; decide on the type of meeting to be held; circulate written material.
- During the meeting — Set the right climate; open the meeting; control the agenda; encourage discussion; summarize; control members' contributions; get decisions made; confirm actions and responsibilities; close the meeting.

- Post-meeting — Review the meeting; evaluate progress and results; ensure total understanding by all members.

It is important that, whatever the reason for the meeting, the right climate is created. It should be a climate of practicality of views and criticisms, and an efficient attitude towards the use of time and resources.

However, it is also important that the correct level of formality is provided for the type of group and discussion taking place. It is important that all members are put at their ease, as a relaxed climate is more likely to bring out the best in any member. Whether the meeting is held to make a decision, enforce some regulation, or announce a new project, an atmosphere that people find uncomfortable will only make them resistant, which will be counter-productive.

Positive moves should be made to set the scene for the whole meeting and thus ensure that no other person dictates the atmosphere. Some specific rules to consider are the following:

1. Begin the meeting smoothly and on time.
2. Start the meeting promptly and do not let other people's casual attitudes waste each other's time.
   Do not postpone or cancel a meeting without very good reason. By postponing or cancelling a meeting you are in fact disrupting other people's schedules. This in turn will disrupt their levels of efficiency and morale. Since the morale of staff is an all-important aspect of staff relationships, by keeping morale high you can ensure a more effective running of departments.
3. Meetings should be scheduled so that you and all the other participants have sufficient time for any necessary preparation.
4. Greet people as they arrive for the meeting and ensure that they are all seated adequately. By using a little informal conversation as they arrive you can put people at their ease. It is also important to ensure that any new member is introduced before the meeting starts.
5. As the meeting starts the topic should be set simply, clearly and early. The aim of the discussion should be set so that everyone is aware of what you want to achieve and what level of progress you would consider sufficient.

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6. Help should be given to everyone to ensure that they make a contribution. The chairperson will need to recognize who is likely to act assertively, aggressively, submissively and passively. It will be necessary to compensate for any imbalance in the discussion and to do that in such a way that no-one will feel threatened or 'put down'.
7. Keep the discussion focused on one topic at a time, and avoid letting any one particular idea be developed to the detriment of others.
8. Be sure to allow only one person to speak at a time, and that only one meeting is taking place!
9. Keep the meeting moving by summarizing or recapping on the ideas which have already been presented.
10. Diffuse any tensions that may result in the meeting not reaching a satisfactory conclusion.
11. Ensure a conclusion is reached whenever possible.

EXERCISE 4.2 BEHAVIOUR AS CHAIRPERSON

Look back at the last meeting you chaired. Did you:

1. Clarify goals and objectives?
2. Set priorities?
3. Promote decision making?
4. Focus people on what they do best?
5. Bring out the best in others?
6. Were you assertive? Domineering?
7. Did you manage time well?
8. Did you communicate well with the participants? Did you ask questions? Challenge assumptions? Listen? Clarify issues? Summarize?
9. Were you aware of individuals' hidden agendas? Did you control them?
10. Did you motivate the meeting to achieve the overall objective?

What changes do you need to make in your behaviour as chairperson to become more effective?

Margerison (1974) suggests that at the beginning of a meeting it is important to ask whether anyone wishes to add an item to the agenda. This serves the purpose of allowing any member who has a 'burning' issue to make it known early, and then be able to relax in the meeting rather than sit anxiously thinking that the point will not be aired during the small amount of time designated for any other business.

Another point Margerison makes which is worth consideration is that the chairperson should discuss with the group the order in which the items should be taken, or a rationale for the priority of each item should be stated.

The chairperson needs to understand how the group functions so that he or she can be aware of the members who may need encouragement to speak and those who may need controlling.

EXAMPLE 4.1

At one regular group meeting there was an underlying conflict between two of the members. It became obvious to A that every time she spoke she would be interrupted by C. At first she thought she was imagining it all, until she sat and moved her lips as though to speak, although at this point she had nothing to say, and instantly C spoke. It became a game, as A would adopt various body movements and facial expressions which would give the illusion that she was about to speak, and C would find something to say regardless of its worth. The chairperson did not notice, and the result was a 'show-down' when A lost her temper and C accused her of never making a contribution to any of the meetings!

Responsibilities of the recorder

The recorder, often a secretary, is the person who, with the chairperson, carries out the preparation for the meeting. Detailed planning will include:

- Pre-meeting — Checks should be made on venue details, date and time; notification to attending members; necessary documents/distribution; refreshments/seating/AVA equipment.

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- During the meeting — Recording of the minutes; those in attendance; actions to be taken; by whom; deadline dates.
- Post-meeting — Writing up of minutes; checking essential facts/figures; agreeing minutes with chairperson; distribution of the minutes.

Responsibilities of the members

Everyone who attends a meeting has a responsibility to make that meeting a success. It is important that all members actually understand the objective of the meeting, the agenda items and the roles of others at the meeting. Points that members should consider include:

- Pre-meeting — Research the case from a personal viewpoint; prepare a reasoned argument with supporting documents; make a note of venue, date and time details; prepare for particular role you are expected to play.
- During the meeting — Listen to the views of others; be constructive when contributing; maintain interest in item being discussed; partake in informal chairing.
- Post-meeting — Complete any tasks allocated at the meeting.

It is important that everyone is prepared to put forward constructive ideas and to decide on the best solution for the problem being presented, even if it means modifying or surrendering your own views.

If a meeting covers several different areas, it is possible that interest could be lost by members once their particular area of expertise has been dealt with. The level of interest should be maintained as much as possible as it is often found that good ideas are forthcoming from a combination of abilities.

If a chairperson fails to fulfil his/her function in a proper fashion one of the members should raise the point of order in a tactful manner. The worst possible situation would be one in which a chairperson loses complete control of a meeting and it would be up to a member to regain some sort of control. It would be necessary to help the chairperson in as diplomatic a manner as possible to avoid any conflict.

EXERCISE 4.3

Study the meetings highlighted below and describe what you need to take into consideration to make them as effective as possible. Think in terms of the following points:

- Where should the meeting take place?
- What should the seating and room arrangements be?
- The timing involved: how much notice should be given and what time of day chosen?
- What sort of information would you expect the members to have prior knowledge of, and to bring to the meeting?

The meetings

1. A newly formed group meets each week to discuss the priorities for the forthcoming week.

2. A new policy is being introduced throughout the organization and the meeting is with your subordinates to inform and discuss reactions to the policy.

3. A meeting is arranged where you are to represent the thoughts of all department heads in your section. The meeting to consider is the one you must have with your colleagues prior to the full meeting.

Behaviour in meetings

There are three types of behaviour in meetings:

1. Task behaviour
2. Maintenance behaviour
3. Self-directed behaviour (hidden agendas)

Task behaviour moves the meeting towards achievement of the objectives, towards achieving a high-quality outcome within time constraints. Such behaviour includes:

- Analyzing the information available.
- Identifying knowledge resources.

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- Defining the problems.
- Making proposals.
- Establishing criteria for success.
- Determining solutions.
- Agreeing the best solution.
- Planning presentation.
- Evaluating.
- Summarizing.

It also includes the procedures to be followed:

- Whether to appoint a chairperson/secretary.
- How to allocate preparatory work.
- What rules to apply.
- When and how to record ideas.
- When to review procedures.

Maintenance behaviour employs social skills to address the issues of how people feel as participants in the meeting and to maintain social harmony:

- How to handle the meeting.
- Who influences whom.
- Who talks to whom, how often, and why.
- Who contributes and who does not, and why.
- Getting genuine commitment.
- Supporting each other's proposals.
- Gatekeeping.
- Encouraging.
- Harmonizing/reducing tension.
- Giving feedback.

Self-directed behaviour occurs when people are trying to achieve their own personal objectives in the meeting, which may or may not be congruent with the overall objective for which the meeting was convened (hidden agendas). Some examples are the following:

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- Attacking/defending your own/others' positions.
- Blocking each other's proposals/being negative/stating difficulties without reasoned argument.
- Diverting the discussion away from areas where you feel threatened or weak.
- Seeking sympathy: making others feel sorry for you and therefore willing to support you.
- Looking for recognition for the value of your contributions.
- Withdrawing: refusing to make a contribution.
- Point scoring: trying to score points off others to enhance your status.
- Monopolizing the discussion.
- Horsing around: trivializing others' contributions.

The main reasons for this kind of behaviour are:

- Difficulties in identifying with the group.
- Problems of conflicting goals and needs.
- A need for recognition.
- Problems of power and influence.

If the existence of these self-oriented behaviour patterns can be recognized and the causes understood, there is a greater chance that undercurrents may diminish, leading to increased effectiveness in task and maintenance processes.

Use the grid in Checklist 4.2 to record your behaviour as a chairperson. Ask a participant or an observer to: (a) recognize the different types of behaviour you exhibit and record them in the appropriate boxes; and (b) to tick each type of behaviour as it occurs, and try to record short quotes showing examples from the meeting which characterize that behaviour.

CHECKLIST 4.2 PERFORMANCE AS CHAIRPERSON

Behaviour	Frequency (tick)	Quotes/examples
Structuring the meeting		
Setting reviewing targets		
Timekeeping		
Encouraging ideas, suggestions, problems		
Clarifying		
Testing understanding, consensus		
Bringing in/shutting out		
Building commitment to decisions		
Premature closure/unclear outcomes		
Adding pace, impetus/slowing down		
Over-control/under-control		
Dealing with conflict		
Reviewing progress/summarizing		
Closing the meeting		

The chairperson has the heavy responsibility to integrate these types of behaviour to make the meeting work, especially so that self-directed behaviour will not be disruptive and time-wasting.

All the skills dealt with in Chapter 3 (Making Presentations) are relevant to the context of meetings. This applies even though meetings are essentially interactive events with equal contributions from all the

members. To ensure that you can effectively participate in meetings you should consider the following aspects:

- You are well prepared.
- Speech is clear and persuasive.
- Criticism is constructive.
- Questioning is clear and constructive.
- Behaviour exhibited is confident and assertive (but not aggressive).

Being well prepared means dealing with the logistics, paperwork, research and contributions needed for a meeting. A checklist is given at the end of the chapter which highlights the questions you need to ask yourself in each of these areas.

Being clear and persuasive indicates that, in any meeting where you are called upon to make a contribution, you will be concise, interesting and confident. In many organizations things are often said and decided in private after the meeting. In some they are never said nor agreed at all, mainly because people feel that their contribution will not be given enough serious thought (see Chapter 3 on Making Presentations).

Constructive criticism will alert people to the fact that you are listening to them. This will encourage them to listen to you. You should listen carefully and with tolerance, making notes where appropriate. Some points worth considering are:

1. Summarizing what the last speaker has said will show your understanding and provide a platform for you to make your point.
2. Do not enter into a debate unless you have a valid contribution to make, as this tends to take up too much time and often detracts from the question in hand.
3. Do not accept an interruption unless it is allowed by the chairperson. Be polite and assertive and continue with what you have to say.
4. Only criticize constructively, even if some ideas are very obviously of little use or interest.
5. Agreeing with something simply to conform with the majority is not a good idea. Once you have looked carefully at your reasons for disagreeing and wish to maintain your ideas, you should state your objections and have them recorded.
6. Disagreeing with something even though your argument has been

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proved to have little basis is also of little use. Have the grace to admit that the argument against your idea is sound.

Questions should be clear and constructive so that all the implications of views expressed can be clearly understood. Do not worry about your need to ask questions to clarify points or even to ask for a summary of the views expressed. Make sure that your questions are to the point, that they have a constructive purpose and that they are put in a way which will not cause embarrassment to yourself or to the person being addressed. Instead of saying, 'Hang on, I don't understand that!', 'That really doesn't make any sense at all', or 'This is ridiculous, you've lost me', it would be better to say, 'Could you recap on that last point?', 'Correct me if I am wrong but are you saying . . .?' and 'Could we have a summary of the position so far?'

Your behaviour should be one of professionalism, confidence and assertiveness. Once you are clear about the way meetings should be handled and your own part in a meeting, then your behaviour will be more positive, rational and assertive, allowing you to put your points across in an effective way and without infringing upon the rights of the other members present. Within the context of a meeting your behaviour should be expressed by clear questioning, a confident voice and manner, eye contact with other participants and a tolerant approach to questions/interruptions.

Relationships within groups, teams and meetings

To ensure that any meeting is held in a constructive and purposeful manner it is important that the following are taken into account:

1. The aim of the meeting should be to progress through a combination of ideas presented by people with differing interests and skills.
2. The group of people involved should be aware of the aims and objectives of the meeting and should work towards that, rather than for their own personal points of view.
3. The climate should be one in which all ideas are listened to and encouraged, with criticism being positive and constructive.

To be able to put these ideas into practice it is important to understand

something about group dynamics, group development and group behaviour.

Group dynamism comes from the ability to accept and share various ideas, to criticize from all aspects, to encourage and stimulate the imagination, to reject ill-suited ideas fairly quickly and to recognize possible solutions early. Such dynamism has to be worked for and needs a tolerant and assertive attitude from all the members. The greatest enemies of an effective meeting are probably best described as bureaucracy, intolerance and the inefficient use of time.

Within any organization, groups usually fall into four categories:

- formal groups
- informal groups
- primary groups
- secondary groups

In the context of the organization, the main groups to which individuals belong are their work groups, created by design (Formal Groups). They may also form relationships with sets of others with similar interests (Informal Groups), which evolve to satisfy the needs of the members. Secondary groups are relatively large groups, the size of which constrains the personal interactions which can take place between all the members (e.g. the US Senate, a football crowd). Primary groups are those in which members have frequent personal contact and are working in a common task e.g. the work groups, the family, a small social group, and which are major influences on the individuals' values and attitudes. In most organizations, the work group can be described as a Formal Primary Group.

The needs of the individuals within the groups are described by Maslow (1971) as a hierarchy composed of:

- survival needs (hunger, thirst . . .)
- security and safety needs (protection against threats . . .)
- social needs (friendship . . .)
- self-esteem needs (status, recognition . . .)
- self-actualization needs (achieving your full potential . . .)

Kakabadse, Ludlow and Vinnicombe (1987) identify another need as the need for personal power. This can be satisfied within a group either

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as power over the other members of the group, or by using the power of the whole group as a lever to effect changes in the organization.

George Homans (1951) established that all groups have three elements in common:

1. *Activities:* what people do in groups. Some activities are completed to satisfy personal needs, others to achieve the group task and some to achieve harmony within the group. They may be prescribed by the organization or carried out by individual choice.
2. *Sentiments:* values, beliefs and attitudes which individuals take with them to a group situation. The social power of the group is great in the sense that new members can be socialized into attitudes and behaviour that they did not possess or had not clarified before entry. It is important from the organization's point of view that the new behaviour fits in with what is required.
3. *Interaction:* interpersonal transactions occur between group members. The behaviour displayed is relevant to both task achievement and maintenance of group harmony and morale and to achieving the satisfaction of personal needs.

Apart from the fact that these three elements are evident within groups, Homans also established that groups showed 'required' behaviour and 'emergent' behaviour.

Required behaviour is what the organization sees as necessary for task performance and membership of the organization. Members are informed of this and are rewarded for fulfilling the requirements. The behaviour required can take many forms but is often seen in such behaviour as punctuality, co-operation with other members of the organization, and achievement of performance standards.

Emergent behaviour is what the individual members actually do, either within the organization's principles or as a modification of them. Individuals make individual decisions on emergent behaviour.

It is the processes that the group uses and the roles that the individual members adopt which influence the success of the group. In the context of meetings, this means the way the meeting runs, and the roles people choose to play in the meeting itself. Understanding the type of group the meeting members are likely to comprise, the levels of needs of the individuals participating, the tasks to be completed, the sentiments they bring with them, and the likely ways in which they will interact with each other, the roles they prefer to play, will enable you to plan your most appropriate strategy for your personal participation in the meeting.

(6.9)

The roles we play in group situations

Belbin (1981) examined the behaviour of various groups working on a management game. Using psychometric measures to analyze the people who made up the successful teams, he established that such teams were made up of people who could work in eight different roles. When these eight roles were truly represented, the groups appeared to be well balanced and to work in a more flexible and resourceful manner. The eight roles represented the following characters:

1. *The chairperson:* he/she clarifies group objectives and sets the agenda. Guiding, co-ordinating, communicating are the main functions.

2. *The shaper:* the task leader who gives shape to the group, unites ideas and produces some sort of pattern.

3. *The plant:* the 'ideas' person who looks for innovative approaches to a problem, although there is a tendency to dismiss the importance of detail.

4. *The monitor/evaluator:* regarded as the analyst, and good at assimilating, interpreting and evaluating data.

5. *The company worker:* the practical organizer of the group, turning ideas into manageable tasks.

6. *The resource investigator:* he/she helps maintain morale and enthusiasm and has an excellent network making him/her a 'Mr Fix-it'.

7. *The team worker:* aware of individual needs and worries, he/she manages conflict and smooths out difficulties. An essential person when the group is experiencing difficulties.

8. *The finisher:* also known as the progress chaser, he/she works to a deadline and tends to demand an orderly way of working.

Belbin points out that although people show characteristics of all of these roles, they do tend to have some long-term stability of role preference. He continues by stating that although preferences do not change much over time, participation in roles which are compatible to their main role often develops. Try to identify what your preferred role is and those of your work group – it will assist your team development.

Handling conflict

One of the most necessary skills to possess for holding effective meetings is the ability to handle conflict. How many times have you been in a meeting when tensions, conflicts and difficulties between individual members have caused a major block to the implementation of ideas and the finding of a positive solution to a problem?

Conflict can arise because of a disagreement about a particular point or even because of the manner in which discussions have taken place. To ensure that there is a greater amount of collaboration and commitment in meetings, the following points should be considered:

1. *Active listening:* this involves paying close attention to what the person speaking is saying and doing. Communication is through words, emotions and body language. The words reflect the intellectual side of the message, the feelings reflect the emotions involved concerning the subject in question, and the body language gives a negative or positive response. A speaker should be given the chance to verbalize his or her thoughts with a minimum of interruption and the maximum amount of help from open questions, probe questions, clarification of ideas and head nodding.

2. *Assertiveness:* being assertive will give a positive reaction to any conflict and, if you are in the chairperson's position, will maintain control over the meeting. Showing assertive behaviour is, according to Back and Back (1987): 'standing up for your own rights in such a way that you do not violate another person's rights' and 'expressing your needs, wants, opinions, feelings and beliefs in direct, honest and appropriate ways'.

3. *Reducing communication blocks:* this must be achieved by reducing any threatening, dominating or aggressive behaviour. It is also important to encourage those who find it difficult to voice their opinions because of the more dominant personalities present.

4. *Emphasis of issues:* issues should be voiced and all the necessary facts gathered. Large issues should be broken down into smaller, manageable ones and problems should be dealt with one at a time. Most importantly – emphasize issues, not personalities!

5. *Decision on actions to be taken:* appraisal of actions and their possible

6.10

consequences should be made, and the agreement of all members obtained concerning the course of any action which needs to be taken. This will act as a deterrent to any conflict at future meetings when the results have to be discussed.

The final word goes to Charles Margerison (1974) who says: 'What is absolutely necessary is the skill to talk to others in groups, to resolve problems, and to seek opportunities. This demands high interpersonal communication skills . . .'

CHECKLIST 4.3 PREPARATION FOR A MEETING

The Domestic Arrangements	• Venue, time, length of meeting
	• Who should attend
	• Who will chair
	• Who will be called upon to speak
Paperwork	• The agenda
	• Minutes from previous meeting
	• Reports to be read beforehand
	• Written reports or graphics wanted at the meeting
Purpose/preparation	• What do you want to achieve?
	• What kind of meeting is it?
	• Do you need to canvass for views?
	• Do you need to acquire specialist advice on any subject?
	• Are you conversant with the reason for the meeting?
	• Do you need to discuss any of the content of the meeting with anyone in a higher management position?
Contributions	• Do you need to use visual aids?
	• Is a written report going to be needed?
	• How much general knowledge of the subject is there?
	• If you have a presentation to make, have you read through the necessary points to consider and followed them?

EXERCISE 4.4 SELECTION COMMITTEE

This is an exercise to give practice in meeting skills. The use of a video recorder is essential. Apart from the people participating in the mock meeting, there should be one or two people as observers. It is envisaged that there are at least four people participating in the meeting. It is interesting to have three or four groups working on this exercise at the same time, especially when it comes to the decisions made concerning who is to be promoted.

Each participant is asked to present a case for a person, from within his or her department, who is being considered for promotion within the organization. Each participant should consider him/herself to be in a middle management position, and to be given a different candidate description, which has been written to take into account the organization's requirements for post holders. The description is of the person each participant has selected for promotion from his/her department. It is assumed that he or she is very aware of the candidate's abilities to meet the job requirements. The description is to be studied and the information prepared for presentation at the meeting.

The discussion is within the group, and you have 45 minutes to discuss the candidates and to make a decision about which one should be promoted. The candidates are to be ranked from one down because of the possibility of further vacancies arising.

The observers can have the use of a tally sheet to direct them to particular types of behaviour, but it is their job to observe the meeting and to report back at the end of the exercise. Questions the observers should consider:

- Who made the most/least effective contribution?
- How clear was the purpose of the meeting?
- How well did people listen?
- What were the most helpful actions?
- Was the time well used?
- Were difficult issues dealt with well?
- Did the group distinguish between fact and opinion?
- What type of questions were used to establish facts and views?
- How were decisions made?

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have examined the various types of meeting we are likely to encounter at work, and how to manage them. Remember that any meeting is likely to cover several issues and topics – a meeting that started out as a vehicle for solving problems may move into a negotiating one as more information is

contributed, and so on. So you need to vary your style of chairing to meet the needs of the situation. Be organized and use your skills, and meetings will turn out to be successful.

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Suggested agenda for formal group-meeting (overview)

1. Acceptance of agenda (incl. acceptance of aim, objectives, success-criteria, timeframe, roles)

2. Acceptance of minutes from last meeting (incl. a summary of results/effects of decisions/actions made)

3. Status (diagram of activities, adjusted plan, focus on special tasks, goals, etc.)

4. Collaboration (internal and external)

5. Other matters

6. Next meeting (incl. provisional aim and objectives and roles)

7. Evaluation of meeting (achievements, timeframe, process)

8. Closure

It is essential that everyone is well prepared for the meeting.

Suggested agenda for formal group-meeting (ad-hoc/task)

1. Acceptance of agenda (incl. acceptance of aim, objectives, success-criteria, timeframe, roles)
2. Situational description
3. Analysis
4. Concluding accepted agreement on aims, objectives, decisions, responsibilities, success-criteria, timeframe
5. Closure

It is essential that everyone is well prepared for the meeting.

Suggested agenda for formal group-meeting (discussion)

1. Acceptance of agenda (incl. acceptance of aim, objectives, success-criteria, timeframe, roles)
2. Introduction (mini-lecture) on topic/subject
3. Discussion
4. Conclusion(s)
5. Accepted agreement on aims, objectives, decisions, responsibilities, success-criteria, timeframe
6. Closure

It is essential that everyone is well prepared for the meeting.

Suggested agenda for formal meeting with advisor

1. Acceptance of agenda (incl. acceptance of aim, objectives, success-criteria, timeframe, roles)

2. Acceptance of minutes from last meeting (incl. a summary of results/effects of decisions/actions made)

3. Status (diagram of activities, adjusted plan, focus on up-coming tasks, goals, etc.)

4. Specific focus for this meeting

5. Collaboration (internal and external)

6. Other matters

7. Next meeting (incl. provisional aim and objectives and roles)

8. Evaluation of meeting (achievements, timeframe, process)

It is essential that everyone is well prepared for the meeting.

Agreement on Collaboration

On basis of our previous sharing of individual experiences, expectations, values, attitudes, goals, success-criteria, ambitions, roles and functions –
we formulate the following accepted agreements (norms, structures and procedures), which are necessary for the achievement of the agreed group goals.

Date for agreement	Version no.

8.1

note: Types of supervisors/facilitators and supervision.

Content / Structure	Problem-oriented supervision	Subject-oriented supervision
Product supervision Result-oriented	Stimulates the analysis and the conclusions. Provides for suggestions to the problem formulation, the analysis, the conclusion etc. Ensures the existence of a unifying principle.	Leads the project towards certain professional questions, which are connected to the interest of the supervisor. ("Research based supervision", where the focus is on the supervisor's research and not on the group research).
Process supervision Course-oriented	Stimulates an independent, self-chosen analysis. Questions problems and problem areas.	Stimulates critical self-chosen use of theories and methodology. The group is doing the research.
Laissez-faire supervision Conflict avoidance, uncommitted	Everything goes, as long as the group is working on their project. The supervisor, who avoids conflicts, will accept everything written, whereas the uncommitted supervisor just may not show up or may cancel meetings.	Everything goes, as long as the group follows the supervisor's usual advice, mainly literature references. The supervisor tells them stories about his own research and is satisfied when the group reads and refers to the literature. Poor quality is accepted.
Control supervision Exam-oriented and resource demanding	Keep deadlines and regularly controls that the project work proceeds. Very active towards the end of the project work.	Discipline/curriculum based supervision. Ensures that the group thoroughly understands the theories. Very active towards the end of the project work.
Control supervision Capacity-oriented	The supervisor participates in the work and confronts the group with the goals and tasks, which the group and the supervisor together have set.	Co-reading and co-responsible supervision. Questioning the group about the theories.

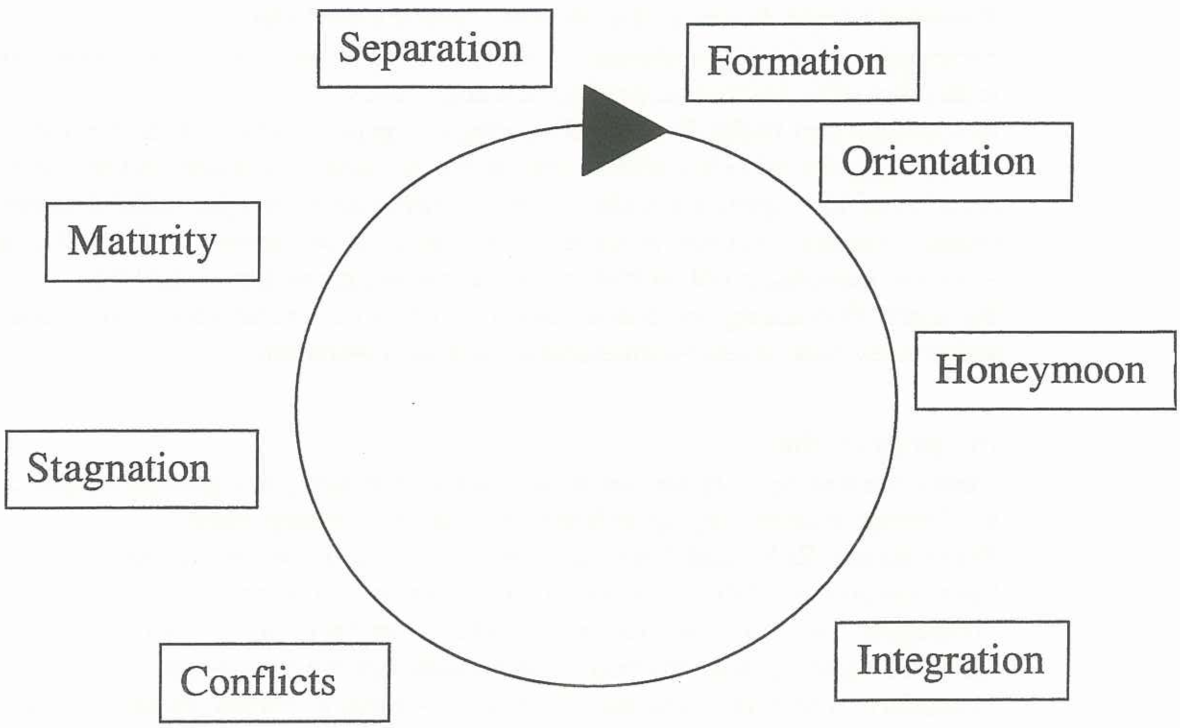
Structure and content of different types of supervision.
Translated from: Olsen, Poul Bitsch and Kaare Pedersen (1997) *Problemorienteret Projektarbejde – en værktøjsbog*. Roskilde Universitetsforlag. P. 164.

9.1

Phases in the life of a learning group
– and how to deal with these phases

By Claus M. Spliid and Gorm Simonsen. 2002.

Learning groups typically moves through a number of stages. There is no fixed course of events – every group is unique – but in most groups there will be a continuous progress through the stages, though regression and stagnation may occur in all stages. Likewise no time-span can be attached to the different stages – development depends upon the group members.
The following presents a sketchy overview of essentials that must be dealt with on an individual as well as on a group basis.



Formation phase:
Characterised by: Insecurity; exclusion; fear and anxiety; unclear communication; negotiation.
Work issues: Values and visions, experiences and goals.
Personal issues: Ambitions, attitudes and expectations.
Strategies: Clarify expectations, vision and goals, competencies, success-criteria and success-area; develop trust in group-relationships.
***Procedures* and tools:** *Clarifying individual standpoints* – rounds; *structured sharing* – rounds, agreement on collaboration (AC).
Dangers: Passivity; in-flexible; perfectionist; misunderstandings; unclear/vague standpoints.

Orientation phase:

Characterised by: Insecurity; unclear goals, norms and roles; power-struggles; superficial communication; possibly disappointment and aggression.
Work issues: Goals, priorities and structure.
Personal issues: Responsibility and trust - involving others and being involved.
Strategies: Break the ice; invite active participation; employ creativity.
***Procedures* and tools:** *Structured meetings* – agenda, roles, rounds, brainstorms, minutes; *clarifying functional roles, tasks and procedures* – AC; *rotation of functional roles* – AC; *social activities* – social calendar; *clarifying goals* – rounds, blackboard, discussion and decision, minutes.
Dangers: Passivity; monopolised leadership; constant opposition; lack of responsibility; lack of transparency, lack of structure; planning without action.

Honeymoon phase:

Characterised by: Abundant communication (superficial); satisfaction; agreement and tolerance; idealising.
Work issues: Decisions, tasks and procedures.
Personal issues: Acting and achieving – and acknowledging.
Strategies: Distinguish between "need to know/do" and "nice to know/do"; develop leadership roles and functions; secure transparency.
***Procedures* and tools:** *Structured meetings* – agenda, roles, rounds, brainstorms, minutes; *clarifying goals and objectives* – rounds, blackboard, discussion and decision, minutes; *revision of AC* - agenda, rounds, minutes; *setting objectives for collaboration* – agenda, rounds, minutes; *securing achievements* – supervision, defining tasks and deadlines; *planning* – review-sessions, problem-tree, resource-management, time-schedule.
Dangers: Prioritising social activities; lack of focus; excessively harmonious; denial of differences; lack of time-management; lack of transparency.

Integrative phase:

Characterised by: Crystallisation of roles and possibly sub-groups; deeper communication; we-feeling; acknowledging differences; ressource-management.
Work issues: Roles and functions; coordination and goal orientation.
Personal issues: Stability; involvement; rewards and norms.
Strategies: Collaborative evaluation and adjustment of aims, objectives, success-criteria and –area, strategies, plans, procedures and results; secure transparency.
***Procedures* and tools:** *Structured meetings* – agenda, rounds, minutes; *develop quality management* – constructive criticism, supervision.
Dangers: Lack of coordination and transparency; lack of openness and listening; social activities absent; fixation on tasks and products; in-flexibility - individual standpoints blocking progress; superficial performance – lack of quality.

Conflict-phase:

Characterised by: Denial; alliances; resolution; divide and rule; negotiation.
Work issues: Responsibility and commitment; agreements and acceptances; success-criteria and success–area.
Personal issues: Controlling others and being controlled; norms and attitudes; trust.
Strategies: Dealing with differences; managing emotions, resources and procedures; arrange social activities; secure transparency.

Procedures **and tools:** *Re-create trust* – giving face, active listening; *resolution* – AC, goals and objectives, rounds, re-organise, re-plan, supervision; *create overview* – focusing, structured problem solving, creativity.
Dangers: Passivity; low productivity; conflict denial; indecisiveness; scapegoating; absenteeism; loosing face.

Stagnation phase:

Characterised by: Lack of changes; fixation and regression; irritability; quality disputes.
Work issues: Realistic production plans, progress management, priorities, leadership roles and functions.
Personal issues: Transparency, gains, achievement and influence.
Strategies: Collaborative evaluation and adjustment of aims, objectives, success-criteria and –area, strategies, plans, procedures and results.
Procedures **and tools:** *Quality management* – evaluation, supervision; *planning* – creativity, defining tasks and deadlines; *recreating project orientation* – review of existing working papers, mind-mapping.
Dangers: Passivity; indecisiveness; inattentative to results and demands; absenteeism; lacking or vague success-criteria and –areas; monopolised leadership.

Maturity phase:

Characterised by: Clear goals and roles; mutual respect; explicit communication of facts and feelings; constructive criticism; mutual understanding; transparency; synergy.
Work issues: Follow-through and follow-up; accountability.
Personal issues: Supporting others and being supported; commitment and trust.
Strategies: Rewarding work and building team spirit.
Procedures **and tools:** *Quality and progress management* – evaluation, supervision.
Dangers: Lack of or too much focus on success-criteria and –area; groupthink; rushing and forced decisions; being too ambitious.

Separation phase:

Characterised by: Joy; grief; aggression; relief; exclusion; social activity.
Work issues: Completion; reflection and evaluation.
Personal issues: Growth and gains; goodbyes and acknowledgements; networking.
Strategies: Collaborative evaluation and adjustment of aims, objectives, success-criteria and –area, strategies, plans, procedures and results.
Procedures **and tools:** *Structured meetings* – agenda, rounds, minutes.
Dangers: Neglecting project completion.

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August 2002
Gorm Simonsen and Claus Monrad Spliid

Structure for the initial sharing of individual experiences and expectations / EM 2002

Source: P. Qvist and C. M. Spliid: slpweb ver. 1.0 www.i4.auc.dk/slpweb/0133

Vision/goal
(What is it my intention to achieve?)
Success-criteria
(When have I reached this goal?)
Success-area/ambitions
(How little/much?)
(How well done?)

Values
(Why am I here?)
(What are my internal and external drives?)
(What will make me stay?)

Accumulated experiences and new expectations

Roles and functions
(What are my competencies?)
(What are my strengths?)
(What am I especially good at?)

Agreement on Collaboration
(Norms, structures and procedures for collaboration)

11.1

Content / Person	Experiences	Expectations	Values	Vision/goal Success-criteria/area Ambitions	Roles and functions	Implications for Collaboration Agreement

Matrix for taking notes before and during sharing of individual experiences and expectations (PBL; collaboration/groups; field/profession)

11.2

P. 90–100 in Mel Berger (ed.) Cross-Cultural Team Building. McGraw-Hill 1996.

6 Training Germans and Americans in conflict management

Dennis Clackworthy

Overview

This chapter will focus on that part of team building dedicated to skill training in cross-cultural conflict resolution, that is, highly important competences needed by cross-cultural team members to cope with tensions and frictions in the team. It adopts a 'culture specific' approach as distinct from a 'culture general' one. This is based on the assumption that conflict resolution skills must be understood and learned in the *context of the specific cultures* represented in the teams to be trained.

It will describe a competency training programme developed by a large multinational concern aimed at pivotal people in German–American project teams. It will focus especially on German–American conflict resolution patterns, by describing a workshop designed to train to achieve the relevant competences.

Central theses

The central theses of the programme are:

- We can only manage our conflicts with people from another culture if we know how they manage their conflicts between themselves.
- We need operational insights into the way we handle conflict in our own culture.
- We need to work out together ways and means of meshing the two approaches.
- We need to develop the on-site competency of actually resolving a mixed team's internal tensions and frictions.
- By mapping out this road to constructive conflict resolution we can mould a corporate culture that counteracts destructive outcomes to conflicts.

12.1

Company background

The company is a major electronic and electrical engineering concern based in Germany. The main target group are leaders and key staff involved in joint German–US projects. The Americans work from over 70 operating companies in the USA, some of which had been autonomous and mature American entities before being acquired by the new German parent, others having started life as greenfield projects without a previous identity. The majority of the Germans work from one of the 20 business or corporate divisions in Germany.

Trainers

The trainers work either full time or freelance from the corporate office in Germany or from the human resource divisions of the US affiliates. The training architect, and author of this chapter, works from a corporate HRD office in Germany. Due to the size of the concern, the trainers are not close to the everyday life of a project team. They interface with managers and leaders enrolled on central courses or carry out workshops for a business division and its counterpart operating company in the USA. Hence, the full gamut of classical team-building methods is not available to these trainers and has not become part of this competency training package.

History

Ten years ago the corporate executive board decided to introduce cross-cultural training into the company. The main thrust was to be culture specific as distinct from culture general. The first key area was to be the German–American interface, as the company was investing heavily in acquisitions and growth in the USA. Since then employee strength in the USA has grown from 15 000 to over 40 000.

Initially, training was developed for Germans destined for transfer to US assignments, then courses were introduced for Americans going on assignment to Germany. Subsequently the emphasis shifted further, to members of project teams operating from their offices in each country—the 'transatlantic commuters'.

As we gained experience in designing training situations for this widening target group, a five-tier course structure evolved.

Cross-cultural training structure

Language courses

Level 1: Language training provides people who are becoming involved in international activities with an opportunity to improve their language skills. Depending on their level of fluency, they can choose from courses ranging from basic survival language for beginners to specialized classes in such technical subjects as negotiating. As the courses become more advanced, so the proportion of cultural learning is

12.2

increased: occasional discourses are given on non-verbal patterns, video training is used to improve style and appropriateness of behaviour, role-play situations introduce a greater relevance to the workplace. The trainer's role is, however, basically that of a teacher.

Cultural awareness courses

Level 2: Cultural awareness courses concentrate on, for instance, a two-day briefing on the USA, which is run for newcomers to the German–US interface. Here the focus is on American values and their related behavioural patterns, with a view to awakening an acceptance of why some things are done differently in the USA. An example is the value pattern labelled 'informality', and the associated practice of greeting in a friendly way, which is demonstrated and explained. It helps for trainers to be American, but it is also important that they have had at least some experience of teaching in Germany, so that they can discuss things with the learners. Their role is that of a country expert.

Intercultural communication courses

Level 3: Intercultural communication courses give learners the opportunity to practise new skills and receive individual feedback. US trainers demonstrate American behaviour patterns and explain the underlying values, as in the cultural awareness briefings, but in addition, the learning is largely experiential. Films and songs are used to breathe life into the value patterns described. Visiting American 'guests' join in some of the training exercises and role plays. Trainers use video feedback to polish the acquisition of some basic new behaviours, and interact with a clear US profile to give the learners practice in handling US reactions. The trainer's role is to be a coach, and to a certain extent a sparring partner.

Interaction training workshops

Level 4: Interaction training in workshops with equal numbers of participants from each culture gives people the chance to learn from and with each other, and to learn how to learn together. It is aimed at people with some experience in mixed project teams. The learning material is generated by the learners themselves, during the performance of simulated business tasks, which makes the learning even more relevant to the workplace. Video analysis is used by trainers to sharpen skills in discovering, understanding and describing cultural patterns and cultural differences. By analysing video recordings and carefully selected scenes showing contrasts in behaviour patterns, trainers can elicit very fruitful discussions and develop constructs which can be used as models back at the workplace. By carefully facilitating these discussions, trainers can catalyse learning on how to be open about culture without giving or taking offence.

A German team got into a spirited discussion of a complex issue and, as is their wont, voices were unconsciously raised a little. An American asked the trainer to freeze the video scene and whether he could ask the Germans in the picture (who were sitting next to him in the workshop) a question. 'Go ahead', said the trainer. 'Would you drink a beer with Wilhelm after that discussion,

12.3

Heinrich?' asked the American. 'Sure', said Heinrich, 'why not?' And you, Wilhelm, could you go on working with Heinrich after that meeting?' 'Definitely', said Wilhelm, 'he's got good ideas and knows that he's talking about'. The American paused, then turned to the trainer: 'Thank you for this lesson, I've been in Germany for six months now and until today I always thought a strongly worded argument was personal criticism'. The subsequent discussion in the workshop shed a lot of light on a very important difference between German and American meeting behaviour. Germans will 'discuss' objective issues emphatically without including personal characteristics in their argument. In contrast, Americans feel their person to be included if people become emphatic, so they keep the tone 'laid back'. The construct developed was given the title 'hammering out the truth/keeping up the interaction'.

The role of the trainers, who incidentally should be able to understand what participants are thinking and feeling at any point in the workshop, is that of a facilitator and construct author.

On-site consulting

Level 5: Consulting at the workplace itself constitutes the top tier in cross-cultural training. Trainers meet with key project leaders and/or visit working project teams, observe cultural patterns relevant to the functioning of the teams, and give feedback and make suggestions as to how these patterns can be meshed. Trainers should command consulting skills as well as those needed at the other four levels.

The intercultural learning curve

One of the purposes of this progressive learning module structure is for learners and their managers to be able to choose the training appropriate to their level of knowledge, experience and skill. Another is to take into account the progression of the typical project team member up the 'cultural learning curve' (see Fig. 6.1).

Learners come into the programme bringing different levels of experience, education and personal aptitude with them. One of the more subtle workshop design issues is to build in enough variety and open space for people at different learning stages to glean what is meaningful to them.

Interaction training

In the remainder of this chapter we will look in detail at some content and design issues for level 4 training measures (interaction training) which are well-suited to a fairly heterogeneous group of learners in terms of the cultural learning curve. However, participants in these interaction training workshops should have had at least 6 months' prior experience of living and working in the 'foreign' culture. This ensures that patterns highlighted in the workshop may be compared with and validated against on-site experiences and also that useful learning material from daily life is brought into the workshop by the participants.

12.4

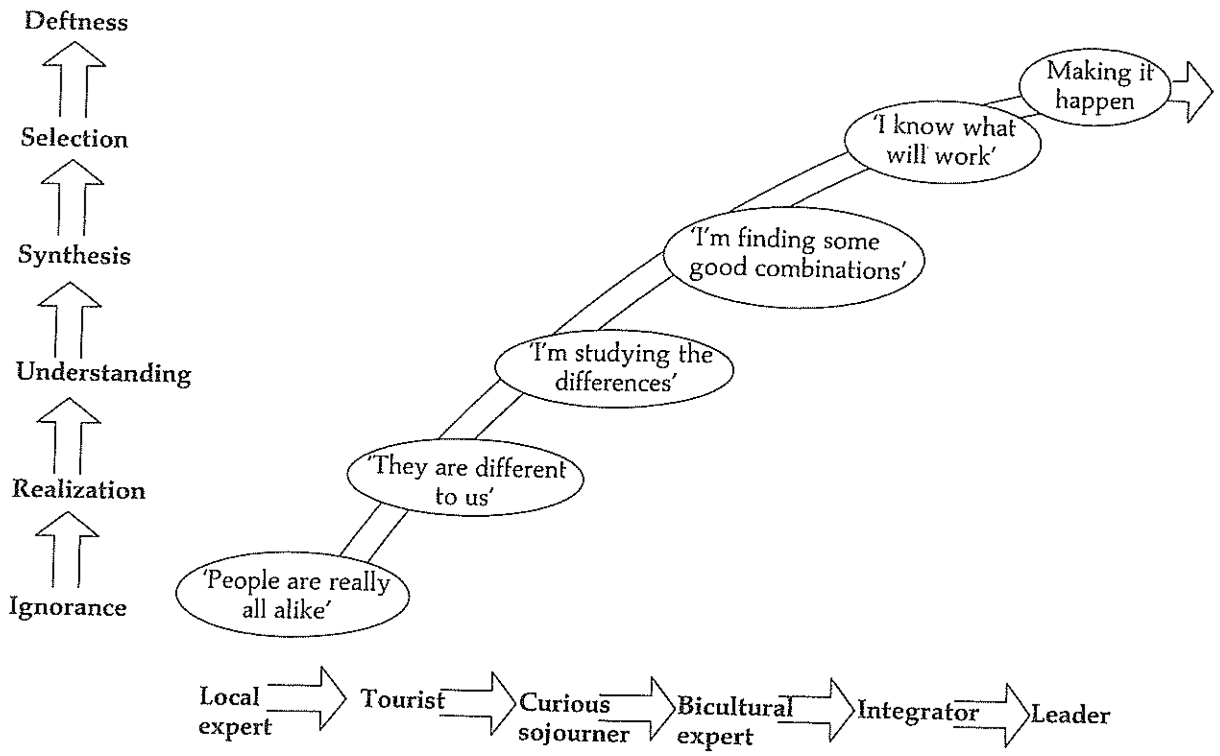

Figure 6.1 *The cultural learning curve*

Interaction training architecture

As a rule, six Americans and six Germans learn together in a 3-day workshop. On the first day they observe how people from the other culture interact with each other. On the second day they observe, and analyse what happens when the two different ways of interaction meet and mesh or fail to mesh. On the third day they seek solutions to recurrent misunderstandings and interaction breakdowns.

Ideally, three interactive workshops should be run at intervals of 6 to 12 months, dealing with progressively more challenging situations. In the first, the focus is on learning to understand each other, to understand that there are culturally determined differences in perceiving and handling tasks, problems and team processes, and how to handle these differences. In the second, the focus is on conflict resolution processes. In a third workshop, which will not be described here, participants learn about innovation and creative team processes.

Methods

The main methods used are:

- Simulated business meetings (e.g. planning a presentation)
- Analysis of video recordings made of the work done in monocultural and bicultural groups

12.5

- Development of constructs (i.e. attitudes, behaviours and assumptions) which differentiate cultural difference
- Open discussion of assumptions, expectations, behaviour and reaction patterns and of the underlying value systems

Training in understanding

In the first workshop, entitled 'Effective Interaction at the German–American Interface', people learn that cultural differences exist and learn how to learn about them. Care is taken to keep these discussions on the level of objective description, of trying to understand why people from another culture do things the way they do and make the assumptions that they do. Learners are encouraged to suspend all judgements, evaluations and moral or other verdicts during this phase. Learners go back to their workplaces knowing that differences can and must be accepted, lived with, described and understood before they are weighed up or labelled as good or bad. Learners then appreciate that only after understanding the differences in depth can the next challenge be tackled: to find effective combinations of the strengths of each culture.

Conflict resolution training

The second workshop, entitled 'Effective Interaction in Difficult Situations at the German–American Interface', deals with conflict resolution patterns in each culture, and the particular chemistry taking place when they collide. The same basic methods are used as in the first workshop. However, it presents several additional *methodological* as well as *content* challenges.

Approach to conflict

We found that Americans, for instance, handle the subject of conflict much less directly than Germans. This was a methodological challenge that became evident when we advertised early pilot workshops under the title 'Effective Conflict Resolution at the German–American Interface'. Experienced US trainers recommended that the title be changed, as it sounded 'too confrontative'. We hypothesize that Germans think much more comfortably in terms of problems and conflict resolution than Americans, and are much more inclined to work explicitly with them. So we decided to talk initially about 'difficult situations', and only gradually increase the level of explicitness during the course of the workshop.

The second methodological problem was that of generating emotional conflict in a workshop in which the learners had had no previous opportunities to get to know each other at work and develop normal levels of interpersonal tension and friction. These had to be contrived in an accelerated fashion during the workshop in order to generate learning material that approximated real-life situations.

A third problem was how to handle destructive conflict resolution or 'win–lose' strategies. This was met by stating quite clearly from the outset that we would be studying constructive conflict resolution

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patterns and concentrating on how people in each culture go about handling tension creatively. One exception was made to this general rule: a section in the workshop makes use of a variation of the 'prisoner's dilemma' game, in order to experience and reflect on the effects of using skulduggery in a conflict situation. This section also generates the highest level of emotional energy, and for this reason the game is played late on the second last day, with ample time informally to work through any animosities arising during the last evening, which had to be designed accordingly.

German–American patterns

On the content side, pre-workshop research showed up several major differences in the way Germans and American manage conflict. Two of them—conflict cycles and 'crossed purposes' must suffice as examples with which to trace the learning track for getting important insights across and transferring them to the workplace.

The conflict cycle

Conflict resolution can be represented as a cycle (see Fig. 6.2). This cycle is probably a universal pattern, with cultural variations playing a major role. It was given to participants as part of a pre-workshop reading assignment.

Time horizons We found out that there is a great difference in the time used to 'go through' the conflict cycle. Conflicts will be recognized, addressed, dealt with and 'resolved' in a much shorter time in America than in

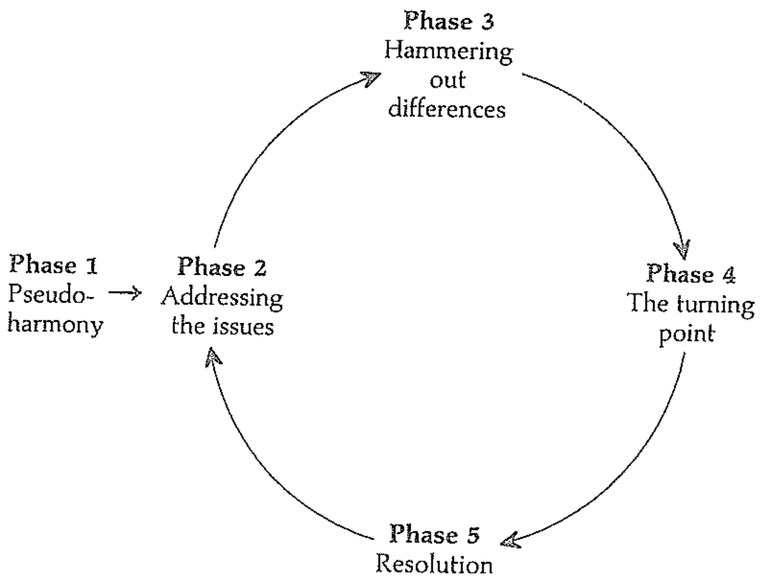

Figure 6.2 The conflict cycle

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Germany—in fact, any cybernetic feedback loops are much shorter in the USA. Feedback is given more frequently, progress is evaluated more frequently, strategies are adapted with greater alacrity, alliances are formed and dissolved more quickly, and project goals are reviewed more often.

A German team will address issues more comprehensively and cerebrally, in comparison to the action-oriented treatment by an American team. Thus, the time taken to hammer out differences is longer. A team will discuss the inputs from more points of view, struggle to analyse the interrelationships of more elements in a system, argue more doggedly about detailed aspects of a problem and adjourn meetings more often to go over the homework again before making another attempt to find a consensus. Consequently, a German group will go into and through the 'turning point' in a conscious and concerted fashion. In contrast, the turning point for Americans is marked more by the feeling: 'let's split the difference and get on with the action'.

Transfer to working life

Once an insight like this is 'discovered', hopefully by means of participants themselves observing and naming the pattern and the facilitators limiting their inputs to pulling together and recording the observations, the group is then faced by the question: 'What do we do with these differences, now that we have recognized them?'

One American, who had been struggling against this German pattern for several years, realized in the workshop that this pattern was the real reason for what he had previously called 'heavy handedness', and assumed to be a tactic to dominate discussions. Back on the job, he was able to sit back, listen, and let a German 'unfold his concept' before interacting on single aspects.

Such gut-level learning is *serendipitous*. The learners determine when an insight lights up and translates into everyday behaviour, not the trainers.

His German colleagues were thereafter much better able to handle his American 'linear bullet-point' inputs, because he had given them the chance to 'spell things out'. The American learned when and how to interrupt a German speaker who had actually said what he had wanted to say and was hoping for someone to interrupt smoothly and fill out the picture from another point of view. The American also learned when and how to interrupt with a factual correction to an essential point in a speaker's line of argument.

He got to the point of 'making it happen' in Germany, and German colleagues came to appreciate his American 'businesslike' more.

'Crossed purposes'

This second example illustrates the value of 'construct development'. Monocultural groups prepare and then meet in a bicultural exploratory joint venture meeting. After a dozen or so workshops a pattern became clear. Germans would start by describing relevant facts and expect to get confirmation or correction from the other side. Americans would start by describing their vision for the joint venture and expect to feel a

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degree of commitment to this or another vision from the other side. Germans were irritated by the American 'superficiality'; Americans were irritated by the Germans 'getting stuck in details'. The construct that emerged is presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

	Germans	Americans
Phase 1 of a simulated joint venture meeting	Concentrate on comparing perceptions of reality—what is	Concentrate on comparing visions of the future—what should be

This juxtaposition of expectations is usually overcome by Americans accepting the 'German toughness' and Germans accepting the 'American friendliness'. So in the second phase, the Americans, who usually get tougher as the negotiations proceed anyway, did so with even more emphasis than usual. And the Germans, who usually get more 'compromise-willing' as negotiations proceed, did so with even more emphasis. Most joint venture meetings were at breaking point after the second round. Only after viewing and discussing the video scenes did these patterns come onto the table. The construct was continued as in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2

	Germans	Americans
Phase 2 of a simulated joint venture meeting	Look for workable compromises	Go for a good deal, drive a hard bargain

In one workshop we gave the total construct, covering both phases, the title 'Crossed purposes'.

At this point, participants who had had several years of experience in German–American joint venture negotiations told stories of big projects which did not get underway due to this fundamental misunderstanding. Subsequent feedback from participants confirmed the validity of this construct, and its usefulness in keeping joint venture negotiations from becoming shipwrecked on imaginary shoals.

Style enhancement

The transfer of learning to the workplace is encouraged by inputs from the trainers on 'style enhancement'—learning to play the game according to the expectations of the negotiating partners, without relinquishing the inner strength of one's own approach. In the case above, Germans learned to think in terms of visions and goals, but

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based on thorough cognisance of a wide range of relevant facts. The Americans learned to work more with 'specifics', using their future orientation to work out operationally-feasible lines of action towards the goal.

Reports from past participants indicate that this type of cross-cultural conflict resolution training generates habits of perceiving, interpreting and coping with conflicts that are much more reality-based than the stereotyping approach normally used to a greater extent before coming to the workshop. One study carried out by the University of Munich showed substantial differences between competency levels of trained and untrained members of international project teams.

Eastern cultures

This method of interactive construct development has been shown to be effective with German–American teams, but now we are facing the challenge of modifying the methods for participants from Eastern cultures. It has become clear that Westerners are comfortable with words—digitalizing their learning in the form of pattern descriptions, constructs, abstract concepts and verbalized thoughts. But how should an interactive workshop be designed for Eastern participants, whose language and thinking structures do not include pattern descriptions, verbalized in these forms? How are trainers to structure the time in a workshop to enable everyone to see an event and formulate their observations in terms that make meaningful exchange possible?

As far as conflict resolution training is concerned, Westerners are emotionally comfortable with talking about conflict, with Germans (and possibly French) being much more so than Americans and Britons. But how should an interactive workshop be designed for Eastern participants, avoiding confrontative statements which cause the other side (or a senior member of one's own group) to lose face?

Need for professional exchange

Ongoing pilot projects are beginning to provide answers to such questions and should one day be the subject of further reports. Training architects should be open to opportunities for exchanging experience and know-how, in the interests of furthering the art of helping people who work at cultural interfaces to move faster and more surefootedly up the cultural learning curve.

12.10

SECOND EDITION

COMMUNICATING WITH STRANGERS

AN APPROACH TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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expected since Japan is a very masculine culture and the United States is below the median on Hofstede's (1980) scores and, therefore, more feminine. In masculine cultures there is relatively little informal communication in opposite-sex relationships and these relationships, therefore, are not considered highly intimate because of the sex-role rigidity that exists in masculine cultures.

These differences in the intimacy ratings of interpersonal relationships are reflected in the communication that occurs in these relationships. Gudykunst and Nishida (1986b), for example, found that there were greater differences between ingroups and outgroups in the degree to which they talk about personal things and are able to coordinate their communication, and in the difficulties they have when communicating in Japan and the United States. This finding is supported by extensive research (Gudykunst et al., in press; Gudykunst, Nishida, & Schmidt, 1989; Gudykunst, Yoon, & Nishida, 1987). Consistent with the masculinity-femininity findings above, Gudykunst and Nishida (1986b) also found greater differences between communication in same-sex and opposite-sex relationships in Japan and the United States.

Before proceeding, there is one additional point that needs to be made on the basis of Gudykunst and Nishida's (1986b) data. If you look at the scores for the first four interpersonal relationships within each culture, you will note that the same pattern exists in Japan and the United States: stranger relationships are seen as the least intimate, acquaintance relationships are next, followed by friend and best friend relationships. In other words, there is consistency in the ratings of the relative intimacy of the relationships.

These patterns of intimacy ratings of interpersonal relationships are reflected in the communication that occurs in the relationships. Gudykunst and Nishida (1986b), for example, found the most personalization and synchronization and the least difficulty in best friend relationships in Japan and the United States. These relationships were followed (in descending order) by friendships, acquaintanceships, and stranger relationships.

Conflict in Interpersonal Relationships

The norms and rules concerning when conflict is acceptable and how it is to be resolved are among the most important ones influencing our communication with strangers. Conflict between individuals serves as a "barrier" to interpersonal communication. "A barrier to interpersonal communication," according to Tafoya (1983), "is anything that prevents, restricts, or impedes the convergence of meaning, by words or gestures, between two or more persons in a social setting" (p. 213).

One dimension of conflict that differs cross-culturally is the basis (reason) for the conflict. Olsen (1978) argues that conflicts arise from either instrumental or expressive sources. Expressive conflicts arise from a desire to release tension, usually generated from hostile feelings. Instrumental conflicts, in contrast, stem from a difference in goals or practices. Ting-Toomey (1985) believes members of individualistic, low-context cultures "are more likely to perceive conflict as instrumental rather than expressive in nature," while members of collectivistic, high-context

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cultures "are more likely to perceive conflict as expressive rather than instrumental in nature" (p. 78).

A second dimension on which conflicts tend to differ across cultures is the conditions under which they occur. Ting-Toomey (1985) argues that in individualistic, low-context cultures conflict is likely to occur when an individual's expectation of appropriate behavior is being violated. Conflict in collectivistic, high-context cultures, in contrast, is more likely to occur when the group's normative expectations of behavior are being violated. The reason for this difference lies in the role of context in providing information in the two types of cultures. In collectivistic, high-context cultures context plays a crucial role in providing meaning to communication messages, while in individualistic, low-context cultures context plays a less crucial role because more information is provided in the message. The more important the context is, the more often violation of collective normative expectations leads to conflict. The less important the context is, the more often violation of individual expectations leads to conflict.

The third dimension of conflict varying across cultures is the attitude of the participant toward dealing with the conflict. Ting-Toomey (1985) takes the position that people in individualistic, low-context cultures "are more likely to possess a confrontational, direct attitude toward conflicts," while people in collectivistic, high-context cultures "are more likely to possess a non-confrontational, indirect attitude toward conflicts" (p. 79). A direct approach to conflict in low-context cultures probably stems from the doing orientation and the use of linear logic. Members of collectivistic, high-context cultures have a strong desire for group harmony and tend to use indirect forms of communication and, therefore, tend to prefer a nonconfrontational approach to conflict.

The final dimension of conflict that varies across cultures is the communication style individuals use for dealing with the conflict. Glenn, Witmeyer, and Stevenson (1977) outline three persuasive styles used to resolve conflicts: factual-inductive, axiomatic-deductive, and affective-intuitive. The factual-inductive method begins with the important facts and inductively moves toward a conclusion. This is the predominant style in the United States, according to Glenn and his associates. The axiomatic-deductive style begins with a general principle and deduces the implications for specific situations, and the affective-intuitive style is based on the use of emotional, or affective, messages. The axiomatic-deductive and affective-intuitive styles predominate in the Soviet Union, according to Glenn and his associates. Ting-Toomey (1985) argues that members of individualistic, low-context cultures are likely to use both the factual-inductive and axiomatic-deductive styles in resolving conflict. She believes that members of collectivistic, high-context cultures, on the other hand, "are more likely to use affective-intuitive styles in conflict" (p. 82).

Ting-Toomey (1988) updated her earlier work arguing that individualism-collectivism can be used to explain preferred conflict styles across cultures. She suggests that people in individualistic cultures prefer direct styles of dealing with conflict. People in collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, prefer indirect styles of dealing with conflict, which allow all parties to preserve face. They tend to use obliging and smoothing styles of conflict resolution or avoid the conflict altogether.

These differences are consistent with Dean Barnlund's (1975) description of conflict strategies in Japan and the United States. He conclude that people in the United States

> prefer to defend themselves actively, employing or developing the rationale for positions they have taken. When pushed they may resort to still more aggressive forms that utilize humor, sarcasm, or denunciation. Among Japanese, the reactions are more varied, but defenses tend to be more passive, permit withdrawal, and allow greater concealment. (p. 423)

Avoiding conflict in order to preserve face is not limited to the Japanese culture. A study of Chinese and North Americans, for example, revealed that Chinese would advise an executive to meet with an insulter and the target of the insult separately so that conflict between the two can be avoided. People in the United States, in contrast, would advise an executive to have a joint meeting so that the problem between the insulter and target of the insult can be resolved (Bond et al., 1985). Similar differences emerge when people in the United States and Mexico are compared. Specifically, Mexicans tend to avoid conflict or deny that conflict exists, while people in the United States tend to use direct strategies to deal with it (e.g., McGinn, Harburg, & Ginsburg, 1973).

Most, if not all, of the cross-cultural studies comparing the United States with other cultures have focused on Caucasians. It must be noted that there also are differences across ethnic groups in the United States. Ting-Toomey (1986), for example, found that blacks prefer a controlling conflict-resolution style, while whites prefer a solution-oriented style. Thomas Kochman's (1981) descriptions of black and white styles of communication are consistent with these findings. He points out that

> where whites use the relatively detached and unemotional *discussion* mode to engage an issue, blacks use the more emotionally intense and involving mode of *argument*. Where whites tend to *underestimate* their exceptional talents and abilities, blacks tend to *boast* about theirs. (p. 106)

Kochman goes on to observe that blacks favor "forceful" outputs (e.g., volume of voice), while whites prefer "subdued" outputs. Blacks interpret whites' subdued responses as "lifeless," and whites interpret blacks' responses as in "bad taste."

Kochman (1981) isolates several other areas where whites' and blacks' styles of communication may be problematic when they communicate with each other, particularly in a conflict situation. One area of importance for dealing with conflict is how members of the two groups view their responsibilities to the others' sensibilities and feelings. He illustrates differences in this area by discussing differences in reactions to an assignment he gave in an interpersonal communication class. Students in the class were told to confront each other and comment on their perceptions of each other's style of communication. The student responses to the assignment divided basically along ethnic lines:

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> Twelve of the fourteen white students argued for the right of students *not* to hear wha others might want to say about them—thus giving priority to the protection o individual sensibilities, those of others as well as their own, even if this might result ir forfeiting their own chance to say what they felt. . . . The eight black students and th remaining two white students, on the other hand, argued for the rights of those student to express what they had to say about others even if the protection of all individua sensibilities would be forfeited in the process. On this last point, one black woman said "I don't know about others, but if someone has something to say to me, I want to hea it." (pp. 122–123)

Kochman argues that withdrawing the protection of sensibilities is seen as "insensitive" or "cruel" by whites, while blacks see whites' failing to say what they think a lack of concern for their real selves.

One of the major implications of these differences is what happens when black and whites are involved in a conflict situation. Kochman (1981) points out that "th greater capacity of blacks to express themselves forcefully and to receive an manipulate the forceful assertions of others gives them greater leverage in interracia encounters" (p. 126). When blacks offend whites' social sensibilities, white demand an apology. Blacks see this demand as "weak" and "inappropriate." Part o the difference is in who is considered responsible when people are upset. Whe whites are upset, they tend to see the cause as the other person. Blacks, in contrast, se themselves as responsible for their feelings. "Blacks will commonly say to those wh have become angry, '*Others* did not make you angry'; rather, 'You *let yourse* become angry' " (Kochman, 1981, p. 127).

The preceding examples are designed only to illustrate the cultural and ethni differences in the approaches to conflict. It is important to keep in mind, however, th there are individual differences within ethnic groups. Responses to Kochman' (1981) class assignment, for example, illustrated that some whites share the approac of his black students. In conflict situations, it is important to be aware of *potentic* cultural or ethnic differences in the approach to conflict, but the focus in resolving th conflict has to be on being mindful of our communication and dealing with the othe person as an individual.

SUMMARY

Our communication with strangers is influenced by the groups to which we belon the roles we fill, and how we define interpersonal relationships. Our membershi groups and our reference groups influence the values, as well as the norms and rule we learn. As part of our socialization into these groups, we are taught to avoid peop from certain other groups (our outgroups). The orientation we learn toward outgrou causes us unconsciously to try to put our ingroup in a more favorable light when it compared with them. This tendency in turn often leads us to make inaccura attributions and predictions about the behavior of strangers from the outgroup.

with strangers. Both prejudice and ethnocentrism lead us to interpret cues from strangers in terms of our own cultural perspective. In other words, highly prejudiced or ethnocentric people do not recognize alternative interpretations and/or evaluations of behavior enacted by strangers. To understand the communication behavior of strangers, we must use their cultural frame of reference, not our own. Stated differently, we need to empathize (the first skill necessary to reduce uncertainty) rather than sympathize.

Sympathy refers to "the imaginative placing of ourselves in another person's position" (Bennett, 1979, p. 411). Sympathy, like ethnocentrism, uses our own frame of reference to interpret incoming stimuli. According to Bennett, if we apply the Golden Rule ("Do unto others as you would have them do unto you") in interactions with strangers, we are being sympathetic because the referent is our own standard of appropriate behavior. Empathy, on the other hand, is "the imaginative intellectual and emotional participation in another person's experience" (p. 418). The referent for empathy is not our own experience, but that of the stranger. Bennett proposes an alternative to the Golden Rule, the Platinum Rule, which he argues involves empathy rather than sympathy: "Do unto others as they themselves would have done unto them" (p. 422). To summarize, the use of sympathy in our interactions with strangers invariably leads to misunderstanding rather than understanding. The use of empathy, in contrast, increases the likelihood that understanding occurs.

Empathy is recognized as an important factor for communication effectiveness not only in the United States but in other cultures as well. Hwang, Chase, and Kelly (1980), for example, conclude that

> [Anglo] Americans, Chinese Americans, and Chinese all share a common view of some basic prerogatives of interpersonal communication effectiveness. The dimension of empathy qualifies as the most prominent of these common points of reference, suggesting once again that it may be nothing less than the sine qua non of human interaction. (p. 76)

Examples of specific characteristics associated with empathy in this study include "listening carefully to what people say," "seems to understand how other people are feeling," "is interested in what others have to say," "is sensitive to the needs of other people," and "can easily understand another's point of view" (p. 74).

The second skill necessary to reduce uncertainty is behavior flexibility. To gather information about and adapt our behavior to strangers requires that we be flexible in our behavior. As suggested in the discussion of knowledge, we must be able to select strategies that are appropriate to gather the information we need about strangers in order to communicate effectively with them. This requires that we have different behavioral options open to us. Do I sit back and watch the other person or go interact with him or her? Which strategy will provide the information I need to know in order to communicate effectively?

We must also be able to adapt and accommodate our behavior to people from other groups if we are going to be successful in our interactions with them. One important aspect of adapting our behavior is the ability ıeak another language (or

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at least use phrases in another language). If we always expect strangers to speak our language, we cannot be effective in communicating with them. Boyer (1990), Chair of the Carnegie Endowment for Teaching, points out that we "should become familiar with other languages and cultures so that [we] will be better able to live, with confidence, in an increasingly interdependent world" (p. B4).

Triandis (1983) points out that the importance of speaking another language depends, at least in part, on where you are:

> In some cultures foreigners are expected to know the local language. A Frenchman [or woman] who arrives in the United States without knowing a word of English, or an American who visits France with only a bit of French, is bound to find the locals rather unsympathetic. For example, I have found a discrepancy between my friends' and my own experiences in Paris. Their accounts stress discourtesy of the French while I have found the French to be quite courteous. I suspect the difference is that I speak better French than the majority of visitors and am therefore treated more courteously. In contrast, in other cultures the visitor is not expected to know the local language. In Greece, for example, one is not expected to know the language although a few words of Greek create delight, and increase by order of magnitude (a factor of ten) the normal hospitable tendencies of that population. (p. 84)

Some attempt at using the local language is necessary to indicate an interest in the people and culture.

The need to adapt our behavior is not limited to speaking another language. We also need to adapt our nonverbal behavior (e.g., the distance we stand from others, amount of eye contact). If we insist on using our own rules of communication, we will, in all likelihood, have misunderstandings when we communicate with strangers.

The final skill to be discussed is the ability to reduce uncertainty itself. If we can empathize and behave flexibly, we can gather the information necessary to reduce uncertainty (see Chapter 2 for discussion of the strategies we can use). As indicated earlier, reducing uncertainty requires that we be able to describe others' behavior, select accurate interpretations of their messages, accurately predict their behavior, and be able to explain their behavior. When we are also controlling our anxiety, these abilities should lead to appropriate and effective communication with strangers.

Given this discussion of the motivation, knowledge, and skills necessary for effective communication, we turn our attention to applying this material. Our focus in the next section is on the important area of managing conflict with strangers.

MANAGING CONFLICT WITH STRANGERS

Conflict is inevitable in any relationship; it is going to happen whether we want it to or not. Many of us, nevertheless, view conflict negatively. Conflict itself, however, is not positive or negative. How we manage the conflicts we have, in contrast, can have positive or ne ˈve consequences for our relationships.

Thomas (1983) defines dyadic conflict as "the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his [or hers]" (p. 891). This definition covers a broad range of phenomena. Conflicts can arise from instrumental sources (i.e., differences in goals or practices) or expressive sources (i.e., tension, often generated from hostile feelings) (Olsen, 1978).

As indicated above, it is not conflict per se that is positive or negative. How we manage the conflict, however, can have positive or negative consequences for our relationships. In managing conflict with strangers, or with people who are similar, it is important that we establish what Gibb (1961) calls a supportive climate.

The first characteristic of a supportive climate is description rather than evaluation. We cannot understand others if we evaluate them before we understand their positions. Using evaluative speech brings up our defenses. Descriptive speech, in contrast, does not make the other person uneasy and, in addition, it allows us to find out how they are interpreting what is happening.

Taking a problem orientation is the second characteristic of a supportive climate. Defining a mutual problem and expressing a willingness to collaborate in finding a solution imply that we have no predetermined outcome we want to see. If we have a predetermined outcome in mind and try to force this outcome on the other person, we are trying to control her or him. Attempts to control others are inevitably met with resistance.

Being spontaneous, as opposed to being strategic, is the third characteristic of a supportive climate. If we appear to have a hidden motive and are acting in what appears a strategic way to others, it will arouse defensiveness in others. If others appear spontaneous and not strategic to us, on the other hand, we will not get defensive.

Empathy is also important in establishing a supportive environment. As indicated earlier, if we convey empathy in our communication with others, others will know that we are concerned with their welfare. If others appear neutral toward us, we will become defensive.

The fifth characteristic of a supportive climate is communicating that we are equal. If we talk in a way that others perceive as sounding superior, others will become defensive. If we truly want to manage conflicts with strangers, we must avoid communicating at Lukens' distances of indifference, avoidance, and disparagement, and communicate at a distance of sensitivity or equality (see Chapter 5).

The final characteristic of a supportive climate is provisionalism. If we communicate to others that we are open to their viewpoint and willing to experiment with our behavior (i.e, try to change it if needed), others will not become defensive. If, on the other hand, we communicate in such a way that indicates that we think we are right and certain of our attitudes and behavior, others will become defensive.

Many of these characteristics of a supportive climate should sound familiar. While the words are not exactly the same, the attitude Gibb suggests in order to resolve conflict is very similar to Langer's notion of becoming mindful. In becoming mindful, we have to create new categories (which is necessary to be descriptive), be open to new information, and not be certain that we already know the answers. The focus is on the process, not the outcome.

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Roger Fisher and Scott Brown (1988) of the Harvard Negotiation Project recommend a similar approach for conducting negotiations. They begin with the assumption that one participant can change a relationship. If we change the way we react to others, they will change the way they react to us. The objective of change is developing "a relationship that can deal with differences" (p. 3). Achieving change requires that we separate relationship and substantive issues and pursue goals in each arena separately.

Fisher and Brown offer a prescriptive approach to effective negotiations. Stated most simply, their belief is that we should always be unconditionally constructive. They contend we must:

> Do only those things that are both good for the relationship and good for us, whether or not they reciprocate.
>
> 1. Rationality. Even if they are acting emotionally, balance emotion with reason.
> 2. Understanding. Even if they misunderstand us, try to understand them.
> 3. Communication. Even if they are not listening, consult them before deciding on matters that affect them.
> 4. Reliability. Even if they are trying to deceive us, neither trust or deceive them; be reliable.
> 5. Noncoercive modes of influence. Even if they are trying to coerce us, neither yield to that coercion nor try to coerce them; be open to persuasion and try to persuade them.
> 6. Acceptance. Even if they reject us and our concerns as unworthy of their consideration, accept them as worthy of our consideration, care about them, and be open to learning from them. (p. 38; bold type omitted)

Few, if any, of us follow the six guidelines in our normal, everyday communication with others. In order to apply Fisher and Brown's guidelines, we must be mindful. As Brodie (1989) points out, "what is unconscious is not within a person's control, but what is made conscious is available for human beings to understand, to change, or to reinforce" (p. 16).

SUMMARY

Effective communication involves minimizing misunderstandings. To be an effective communicator requires that we be motivated, and have the appropriate knowledge and skills. We must be motivated to approach strangers and communicate effectively. We must have knowledge of and skills for reducing our uncertainty and anxiety. To reduce anxiety, we must be able to be mindful and tolerate ambiguity. To reduce uncertainty, we must be able to empathize, behave flexibly, and possess the skills to gain knowledge of others and their culture and ethnicity when necessary.

Conflict is inevitable at some point when we communicate with strangers. Conflict, in and of itself, is not positive or negative. How we manage the conflict is critical. To manage the conflict constructively and communicate effectively, we must be unconditionally accepting of the person with whom we are in conflict and set up a supportive envi ent to resolve the conflict.

Peter Berger argues recognizing cultural relativity "does not, of course, free the individual from finding his own way morally. That would be another instance of 'bad faith,' with the objective fact of relativity being taken as an alibi for the subjective necessity of finding those single decisive points at which one engages one's whole being" (cited by Barnsley, 1972, p. 355). In other words, even if we accept cultural diversity, we must still make ethical judgments in our interactions with strangers. Like Berger, Renteln (1988) contends that cultural relativism

> does not force its adherents to foreswear moral criticism. Relativists, like everyone else, are ethnocentric . . . and remain true to their own convictions. There is no reason why the relativist should be paralyzed [from making moral judgments]. . . . But the relativist will acknowledge that the criticism is based on his [or her] own ethnocentric standards and realizes also that the condemnation may be a form of cultural imperialism. Under extreme circumstances, meaning that an action in another culture violates one of the relativists' most deeply held beliefs, the relativist may decide that criticism and even intervention are lesser evils than either ethnocentrism or cultural imperialism." (pp. 63–64)

Relativists cannot avoid making ethical judgments of people from different cultures. While there is not a metaethic to guide our moral judgments, as Barnlund points out, there may be cultural universals that can be used. Bidney (1968), for example, suggests that there may be universals regarding prohibitions against activities such as treason, murder, rape, and incest because "in all cultures the perpetuation of society takes precedence over the life of the individual" (p. 545).

In discussing the moral constraints necessary for peace, Bok (1989) suggests additional areas where there may be cultural universals in ethical behavior:

> Of the four, two are the widely acknowledged curbs on violence and deceit. . . . To cement agreement about how and to who those curbs apply, and to keep them from being ignored or violated at will, a third constraint—on breaches of valid promises, contracts, laws, and treaties—is needed.
>
> Whether expressed in religious or secular form, these three values are shared by every civilization, past and present. Any community, no matter how small or disorganized, no matter how hostile toward outsiders, no matter how cramped its perception of what constitutes, say, torture, has to impose at least *some* internal curbs on violence, deceit, and betrayal in order to survive. But because persons acting clandestinely easily bypass or ignore these constraints, a fourth is necessary on excessive secrecy. (pp. 81–82)

While Bok's list of moral constraints is not the only possible basis for making cross-cultural ethical judgments (e.g., the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights also can be used), her list of moral constraints provides the basis for the development of a set of universal ethical principles. In addition, the practice of Bok's moral constraints in a group provides an environment in which peace and community can be nurtured (for extended discussions of the importance of nonviolence see Gandhi, 1948; King, 1958).

19.6

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY BUILDING

To review, a community consists of diverse individuals who are honest and open with each other, trust each other, engage in ethical behavior, and are committed to living together. Members of a community are civil to each other, and they value diversity while, at the same time, they search for the commonalities humans share. Community makes life worth living, and the existence of community makes peace and intergroup harmony possible. While community occurs in groups, individuals must take the responsibility for building community in their marriages, work places, schools, cities, nations, and in the world. Finally, members of a community behave ethically.

To conclude, we synthesize the information presented in this chapter into a set of principles for community building (this section is based on Gudykunst, 1991). The principles presented are based on several assumptions:

1. Community is necessary to make life worth living and increase the potential for peace in the world.

2. Developing community is the responsibility of the individual. Each of us must take the responsibility for building community in his or her own life.

3. Cultural and ethnic diversity (and all other forms of diversity, as well) are necessary resources for building community. A true community cannot exist without diversity.

4. Communities can be any size (e.g., a marriage, a social organization, a university, a town, a country, or even the world), but we must start building community in the smaller groups of which we are members (e.g., families) and work toward developing community in the larger groups (e.g., universities, towns).

5. We are what we think. Jampolsky (1989), among others, points out that "everything in life depends on the thoughts we choose to hold in our minds and our willingness to change our belief systems" (p. 31). Similarly, in *The Dhammapada*, Buddha said that "our life is shaped by our minds; we become what we think."

6. Community cannot exist without conflict. Hampshire (1989) argues that we should expect "ineliminable and acceptable conflicts, and . . . rationally controlled hostilities, as the normal condition" (p. 189). To develop community, individuals must engage in graceful fighting: try to persuade each other, but not coerce each other. Be committed to principles, not being right.

7. As Fisher and Brown (1988) suggest, one person can change a relationship or start the development of community. If one person follows the principles suggested below, people with whom this person comes in contact will change their behavior.

Given these assumptions and the material summarized in this chapter, Gudykunst (1991) derived seven community-building principles:

1. *Be Committed*. We must be committed to the principle of building community in our lives, as well as to the individuals with whom we are trying to develop a community. Commitment to others is a prerequisite for community to exist (Peck, 1987).

2. *Be Mindful*. Think about what we do and say. Focus on the process, not the outcome (Langer, 1989). Be contemplative in examining our own behavior and that of the communities of which we are members (Peck, 1987).

3. *Be Unconditionally Accepting.* Accept others as they are; do not try to change or control them (Fisher & Brown, 1988). Value diversity and do not judge others based only on their diversity. Minimize expectations, prejudices, suspicion, and mistrust (Peck, 1987).

4. *Be Concerned for Both Ourselves and Others.* We must walk a narrow ridge in our interactions with others whenever practical; avoid polarized communication (Arnett, 1986) and engage in dialogue whenever possible (Buber, 1958, 1965). Consult others on issues that affect them and be open to their ideas (Fisher & Brown, 1988). Fight gracefully (Peck, 1987).

5. *Be Understanding.* Strive to understand others as completely as possible. As King (1963) said, "shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will" (p. 88). Determine how others' interpretations of events and behaviors are different from and similar to our own. Recognize how culture and ethnicity affect the way we think and behave. Search for commonalities on which community can be built. Balance emotion, anxiety, and fear with reason (Fisher & Brown, 1988).

6. *Be Ethical.* Engage in behavior that is not a means to an end, but behavior that is morally right in and of itself (Bellah et al., 1985). Be reliable in what we say and do (Fisher & Brown, 1988). Be morally inclusive (Optow, 1990); engage in service to others (Lynberg, 1989).

7. *Be Peaceful.* Do not be violent or deceitful, breach valid promises, or be secretive (Bok, 1989). Even if others engage in these behaviors toward us we are not justified in engaging in these behaviors toward them. As Socrates pointed out, retaliation is never justified (Vlastos, 1991). Strive for internal harmony and harmony in relations with others.

These seven principles are ideals for which we can strive. The more we are able to put them into practice individually, the greater the chance for community and peace in the world. We must not, however, be hard on ourselves when we fail to achieve the ideal. Achieving these ideals is a lifetime's work and requires extensive practice. If we are to tolerate others, we must begin by accepting our own mistakes. As Prather (1986) points out, when we find that we are not engaging in behaviors we want to practice (e.g., building community), we must forgive ourselves and start anew at practicing the behaviors. For most of us, this will occur numerous times a day initially. The behaviors suggested in the ideals are different from those we have learned from birth. To engage in these behaviors consistently, we must unlearn many of our normal behaviors (e.g, behaviors that occur at low levels of awareness such as reacting defensively and looking out only for ourselves). The critical thing is not the outcome, but the process. If we *try* to behave in a way consistent with these ideals (the process), community (the desirable outcome) will occur.

SUMMARY

Polarized communication predominates in the world today. There is a lack of concern for others present in the world today that often leads to strangers' being morally

13.7

excluded. Communities, however, are inclusive, and cultural and ethnic diversity are resources for building community. The development of community requires that we walk a narrow ridge when communicating with others. To develop community in our lives, we must be committed, mindful, unconditionally accepting, concerned for both ourselves and others, understanding, ethical, and peaceful.

To conclude, we have tried to present the material that we think will help you understand your communication with strangers. Understanding is a necessary prerequisite for effective communication. If we do not understand how strangers are different from and similar to ourselves, we cannot communicate effectively with them. To understand strangers (and people who are familiar), we must be able to manage the anxiety we experience when we communicate with them. Understanding strangers (and people who are familiar), therefore, requires that we be mindful of our communication.

We generally are not mindful when we communicate with strangers or people who are familiar. When we are mindful, however, we can cognitively manage our anxiety and figure out how our interpretations of messages differ from those of the strangers with whom we are communicating. Deciding whether we want to make the effort is up to each of us. We can continue our normal patterns of communication—communicating on automatic pilot and interpreting others' messages using our frame of reference. Making this choice ensures that a large portion of our communication with strangers will be ineffective. If we choose to try to understand strangers, the likelihood of our communication with strangers being effective increases. Understanding strangers does not mean that we have to accept behavior we find objectionable. Rather, we need to understand what the behavior means to the strangers before we judge them and to realize that our judgment may be ethnocentric.

Attempting to understand strangers increases the chance we will be able to build community in our lives and foster peace on the planet. While these are idealistic goals, they are achievable, if each of us does his or her part. Let us begin!

Basic Rules for Project Writing

1. Write write write and write again

Write work papers on everything you read

- Then all group members can share the knowledge
- The group will be able to remember
- And parts of the writing might fit into a chapter in the final report

Write work papers on your discussions

- Thus the different views become clear
- Use possible differences constructively in your forthcoming work
- Part of this writing might also fit into a chapter in the final report

Write minutes on comments to work papers on chapter drafts

- This accounts both on comments from supervisors and comments from other group members

2. Get the references correct the first time

All numbers and claims etc. need a reference.

An example: "the firm uses 5 l of water for each product, which is very much"
The 5 l need a reference, which is also the case with the claim that it is very much.

Avoid plagiarism

- When using another writer's word you need *quotation marks*, the *exact wording* and a *precise reference* to the source
- It is not acceptable to edit another writer's words and present them as your own, you need to refer to the writer
- It is not even acceptable to present another writer's *idea* without referring to the writer

Use acknowledged reference system

Several reference systems exist, use only one consequently throughout the whole report, working papers etc. Below is a good link to an overview of some of these reference systems
http://wwwlib.murdoch.edu.au/guides/cite.html

3. Agreements should be apparent for all members of the group

A group needs to agree on some issues, e.g. what is the report about, what is the report structure, and who does what, at what time.

- It is important that everyone is clear on the content of agreements. Therefore write it down in your minutes.
- If you cannot agree on some of the central issues the group might need to make a decision, which not everyone agrees upon. However, each group member needs to accept the decision and work within its directions.