

Small Group Communication Theory, cont.

Rationale: Interaction diagrams are an important and accessible method of conducting small group observation work. Students will need to know how to create an interaction diagram for their Community Group Observation assignment.

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Take observation notes in a group setting
- Prepare an interaction diagram

{video}

You may download a copy of the visual aid used in this video: [L03-small-group-communication-theory-continued-visual-aid.pdf](#)

Outline of the Lesson

- I. Review of previous session's content
- II. Lesson Opening:
- III. Overview
 - A. Taking observation notes
 - B. Preparing an interaction diagram

Body

- I. Taking observation notes
 - A. When you attend the meeting, you will prepare field notes
 1. Describe the overall environment to set the stage
 2. An interaction diagram is an important part of your field notes in communication research on teams and small groups.
 3. Use the same way of identifying members in your notes and in the diagram
 4. Record as much as possible about the interactions that might be interesting
 5. You do not need to write down everything that happens, but you will write a lot if you are doing a good job
 6. You will need to write quickly, so these notes will be a mess and they won't be useful for long.
 - B. Expand on your field notes shortly after the observation to create your observation notes
 1. You need to do this soon while your memory is still fresh
 2. Write all of your observation notes in one color of ink
 3. On the first pass, stick to the facts of what happened and write in only one color.
 4. You can do additional passes after in a different color to record your

own opinions, thoughts, and insights

II. Preparing an interaction diagram

A. Notate each group member

1. Names: Fred, Liu, Maggie
2. Initials
3. Researcher nicknames: "Purple Pants"
4. ID numbers

B. Draw a line for each communication event

1. Communication to the entire group is an arrow drawn away from the center.
2. Communication to a specific individual is an arrow from the sender to the receiver.

Conclusion

I. Review

A. Taking observation notes

B. Preparing an interaction diagram

II. Learning activity

III. Lesson closing

References

Beebe, S. A. & Masterson, J. T. (2012). *Communicating in small groups: Principles and practices* (10th ed.). Pearson.

Learning Activity

Complete one of these two class activity options.

In the Classroom

1. Watch the practice panel discussions
2. Create an interaction diagram for the panel discussion
3. Discussion questions:
 - How did the interactions in the different groups differ?
 - What additional information do you think would be useful to add to the diagram?

Remote

1. Watch the practice panel discussions
2. Create an interaction diagram for one of the panel discussions (I recommend the one that you participated in)
3. Scan or photograph your diagram
4. Upload the diagram here

Variations and Accommodations

Follow guidance from local accommodation authorities. Please contact your instructor if any accommodations are necessary.