

Making Decisions and Solving Problems

2020-04-14

Course(s) Used:

- Team and Small Group Communication

Goals and Objectives:

- Students can describe the various mechanisms available to make decisions within groups

Rationale:

Groups work best when the decision-making process is explicitly identified and decision-making mechanisms are chosen intelligently

Materials Needed

Materials:

- None

Technology:

- Classroom computer and projector

Outline of the Lesson

1. Review of previous session's content
2. Groups make the best decisions when the process is explicitly identified¹
3. There are 5 steps to group decision-making:
 - A. Assess the situation
 - B. Identify goals
 - C. Identify alternatives
 - D. Evaluate alternatives and their consequences
 - E. Actually making the decision²
4. Group decision-making mechanisms
 - A. Choice of mechanism represents a 3-way trade-off between Decision Quality, Relationships, and Speed
 - B. Decision by Expert
 - C. Averaging Individual Rankings/Ratings
 - D. Random Choice
 - E. Majority Decision

¹ Gouran, D. S. & Hirokawa, R. Y. (1996). Functional theory and communication in decision-making and problem-solving groups: An expanded view. In R. Y. Hirokawa and M. S. Poole, Eds., *Communication and group decision making*, 55-80. Sage.

² Today's lesson focuses on mechanisms for group decision-making

- F. Minority Decision
 - G. Consensus
 - H. Judge systems^{3/4}
5. Lesson closing

³ This method is not described in the textbook

⁴ This method includes decisions made by a leader

Variations and Accommodations

Follow guidance from local accommodation authorities.