

We dedicate The Public Speaking Playbook to our children, Lindsay and Dan, and Matthew and Tong, and to the memory of our parents, Martha and Marcel Kwal, and Nan and Wesley Gamble. One by one, over and over, you have shown us the difference that executing the right play makes in the game of life. For that, we love you and will always be thankful.

THE Public Speaking PLAYBOOK

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Developing a comprehensive understanding of your audience will have profound effects on your speechmaking. If diversity means difference, then your challenge as a speaker is to find ways to make your message inclusive of the different ages, religions, education, sexual preferences, races, cultures, group memberships, and psychographic profiles represented among the receivers. As you prepare and plan your speech, keep in mind everything you have learned about the various constituencies that comprise your audience, as well as the specifics of the speaking situation. You need to:

- Phrase your topic in such a way that audience members will not be turned off by it or tune it out.
- Resist the urge to concentrate exclusively on what you want to say; spend more time understanding what the audience wants to hear.
- Convince audience members early in your presentation that what you are communicating will solve a problem they have, help them reach their goals, or otherwise enrich their lives.
- Use your creative powers to encourage your listeners to care about your subject.
- Build on whatever common ground exists between you and your audience; make a personal connection with them.
- Always refer first to areas of agreement before speaking about areas of disagreement.
- Demonstrate that you respect your listeners; if they sense that you think you're superior to them, chances are they won't listen to you. If you communicate to them in words they don't comprehend, your speech won't matter even if they listen to it.

- Hear and see yourself and the speaking environment through the ears and eyes of the members of your audience. Put yourself in their place and they will more readily give you their attention.

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GAME PLAN

ANALYZE YOUR AUDIENCE

- I HAVE CONSIDERED THE DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS OF MY AUDIENCE AND STRATEGIZED THE BEST APPROACH FOR MY SPEECH.
- I HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF MY AUDIENCE'S VALUES, BELIEFS, AND ATTITUDES TOWARD MY TOPIC.
- I UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF MY SPEECH, AND I KNOW WHAT MY AUDIENCE EXPECTS OF ME.
- I HAVE QUERIED MY CONTACT ABOUT THE PHYSICAL SETTING AND ORDER OF SPEECHES, AND I'VE ADJUSTED THE LENGTH OF MY SPEECH TO SUIT THE OCCASION.

WORKOUT EXERCISES

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

Participating in the following activities will enhance your audience adaptation abilities.

1. What Do You Know?

Use what you know about demographics and psychographics to analyze the members of this class and another class. Explain how you will apply the information in your next speech or presentation in each class.

2. Adapt This

Imagine that you were asked to deliver a speech on the contributions of the women's movement to an audience composed of primarily profeminist receivers, and an audience composed of predominately antifeminist receivers. Describe how you might prepare your address to appeal to members of these diametrically opposed audiences without sacrificing your personal principles.

3. Analyze the Audience: Do Audience Members Want to Be Present?

Some audiences attend speeches voluntarily. Others have to be present. Whether audience members are interested in what you have to say or attending simply because they have to affects how you go about presenting your message. If audience members don't want to be there, but must attend, explain what you will do to try and win them over. Specifically, what will you do to make your speech relevant and of interest to them?

4. Approach the Speaker's Stand

Develop a survey to analyze an audience on an issue of your choice; your survey should contain closed-ended, scaled, and opened-ended questions. Once you are sure your survey's questions are clear and unambiguous, have class members complete it. Then, based on what survey results and personal knowledge tell you about your listeners' knowledge of and attitudes toward your chosen issue, explain how you would take that information into account when planning a presentation.

Specifically, in a two- to three-page paper explain how conducting such an analysis helps in addressing both the needs and interests of receivers, and describe how you could use the insights you gained from surveying receivers to guide you in:

- Formulating your objective
- Creating an introduction and a conclusion
- Organizing your main points, and
- Wording a speech

Once this is done, develop a presentation that puts your plan into action.



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Planning and Presenting in Groups

UPON COMPLETING THIS CHAPTER'S TRAINING, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

1. Define and identify characteristics of a small group
2. Compare and contrast speaking individually with speaking and presenting in groups
3. Demonstrate how group leaders and members contribute to or detract from a group's effectiveness
4. Use the Reflective Thinking Framework
5. Use brainstorming to facilitate group problem solving
6. Participate in a group presentation

Both online and off-line, groups are omnipresent. You probably have had—and will continue to have—numerous opportunities to engage with and work in groups. You may devote significant time to being part of an improv group, a sports team, or an a capella group. Whatever the nature of your group, its success depends on your ability to work together, coordinate your performance, and maintain awareness of your fellow members and leader. Most likely, a significant percentage of the speaking you will do will occur in a group setting. During your college and professional career, it is very likely that you will be asked to complete group projects, speak as part of a panel at an academic conference, or pitch a business proposal before a small group. Some business people spend more than 700 hours a year interacting in groups. In fact, most of the average manager's time is spent meeting in groups of one kind or another.¹

A **small group** is a limited number of people who communicate over a period of time, face to face or online, to make decisions and accomplish specific goals. Groups comprising five to seven people usually function best because this size enables members to communicate easily with each other as they interact to reach a goal. However, it is not uncommon for some work groups to contain as few as three or as many as fifteen people. Each individual in a group has the potential to influence the others and is expected to function both as a speaker and a listener. Because members respond virtually immediately to the verbal and nonverbal messages of others in their group, groups are often distinguished by the spontaneity of member interactions.

Group members share a common objective. Each person occupies a particular role with respect to the others, and works with them, cooperating to achieve a desired end. As they interact, members develop certain attitudes toward each other and they hope a sense of satisfaction from belonging to and participating in the group. Members of a group are expected to adhere to group's norms—the “do's and don'ts” that groups establish to regulate the behavior of members and make it possible for them to work together to attain the group's goals.

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SPEAKING IN PUBLIC VERSUS IN A GROUP

When you participate in small-group communication, you need to make a number of skill adaptations.

1. Your attention needs to focus on the interaction among multiple speakers and listeners. No longer are you a single speaker addressing a large group of receivers.
2. Instead of delivering a formal speech, group members speak and listen to one another.
3. Although when giving a speech, you may be unaware of the audience's disagreement with your position, when you interact within a group, there can be free discussion of the topic until group members either reach an impasse or commit themselves to supporting a conclusion.
4. Although disagreements may go unexpressed during a public speech, in small groups, disagreements among members are expressed often. Groups generally explore reasons for the disagreements and make efforts to resolve them.
5. After listening to your speech, audience members will accept or reject your ideas. When interacting in a group you and other group members will reach decisions together, ideally by consensus.

Despite these differences, the following five requirements remain the same:

1. You need to have a command of the subject, supporting your comments with research.
2. You need to organize your ideas effectively.
3. You need to pay attention to the way your ideas affect others.
4. You need to be aware of the needs and concerns of receivers.
5. You need to use language that others will understand and respond to appropriately.



Interact and decide. Speaking in a small group may lead to more interaction and decision making than speaking individually before a large audience.

Every group defines its own objectives and establishes its own norms, setting its own operating climate. Ultimately, how members relate to each other, the roles they assume, and how they exchange information and resolve communication problems that pop up determine the effectiveness of the group work. Member interaction—*what members say and how they say it*—affects both the group's health and its long-term viability.

Healthy groups exhibit five characteristics:

1. Members support one another.
2. Decisions are made together.
3. Members trust one another.
4. Communication is open and candid.
5. The group aims to excel.²

Keep these five characteristics in mind as we focus on two key kinds of problem-solving groups:

1. The **fact-finding group**, whose members share thoughts and information in an effort to enhance understanding and learning, and
2. The **decision-making group**, whose members seek a consensus regarding what the group should or should not do

In this chapter, we explore how to function in and relate to other members of a group; a structure for facilitating group problem solving; and how the results of a group's efforts can be communicated to others who have a stake in the group's work—perhaps an employer, the board of directors, or even the public at large. Whatever the specific nature of a group's task, whether it is to present an advertising campaign to a client, recommend a policy to management, or discuss conflicting opinions relative to a complex social issue, knowing how to operate and interact effectively in the group setting is vital for both the personal and professional success of members.

PLAY 21.2

WORKING TOGETHER

Although effective membership and leadership are both essential for group success, good leadership often begins with effective membership. All must participate fully and actively in the life of the group. Every member must assume and fulfill certain responsibilities and recognize how his or her performance contributes to or detracts from the group's attaining its goal.

21.2a Preparing as a Group

To work effectively together, the first thing members need to do is spend some time sharing their school and work schedules and getting to know each other. Part of this process is to figure out each member's strengths: Who, for example, is a visual artist? Who is into technology? Who is the most organized? Members also should share their expectations for working together. In other words, members need to work out how to work together to accomplish the group's work. They can designate a leader—the person the group determines it can count on to keep members focused and who will work out the logistics of and agendas for their meetings. The group can also establish a series of rules for its operation, the do's and don'ts of group life. They might decide, for example, that members should be on time for meetings, members should be prepared for meetings, and members should behave appropriately when another group member is speaking—that is, members should give their full attention to the speaker and not be self-absorbed.

Another part of the process is to figure out the audience—what they already know about your subject and what additional information they will find useful and enlightening. Specifically, you want to identify how you can meet their interests and needs.

During the planning period members also establish how they will conduct their research and pool their findings. Once group members complete the research phase, they then need to spend time outlining the presentation to meet the demands of their assigned or selected delivery format. They also should identify the multiple technologies that might benefit the group's presentation—being certain to develop a means for coordinating templates for presentation slides, including font size used, colors featured, and style.

Members also need to work out the order in which group members will speak. And, of course, the group needs to practice its presentation, including the integration of technologies, many times before getting up to present.

Let's zero in on member roles and responsibilities.

21.2a Preparing as a Group

21.2b Member Roles and Responsibilities

21.2c Leadership Defined

21.2b Member Roles and Responsibilities

Specific members do not “own” specific roles; rather, they carry out and perform various responsibilities. Positive group roles accomplish dual task and maintenance functions. That is, they both help meet the group's goal and contribute to the way group members interact with each other as they work toward that goal. Negative group roles limit the group's abilities to realize the group's goal. The roles members perform can improve task performance, help the group maintain itself by fostering a concern for the needs and feelings of group members, or inhibit group performance by revealing an overriding concern for self and minimal concern for group success. (See Table 21.1.) The options are open; the choices are yours.

What kind of group member are you? Consider the assets and liabilities you bring to a group experience by indicating which of the following task-oriented, maintenance-oriented, or self-serving roles you characteristically perform in a group and noting specific instances of how your behavior either contributed to or detracted from the success of your last group.³

By performing appropriate task- and maintenance-oriented roles, members help to advance their group's goal(s). However, when members enact one or more of the self-serving roles, they are behaving just as the label given to describe these roles suggests: selfishly. Performing self-serving roles may meet the personal needs of a group member, but because the focus of these roles is on the individual rather than on the group, they function to limit the group's effectiveness and waste its time.

More successful groups have another major attribute that helps distinguish them: the one or more members—though not necessarily the appointed leader—demonstrate effective leadership.



Better together. Consider what kind of group member you are and how you can advance your group's goals.

TABLE 21.1 GROUP ROLES

TASK-ORIENTED ROLES		
Initiating	You defined a problem, suggested methods, goals and procedures; and started the group moving along new paths or in different directions by offering a plan.	<i>"Rather than dwelling on problems, let's work on discovering how we can make things better."</i>
Information seeking	You asked for facts and opinions and sought relevant information about the problem.	<i>"Can you show me what you discovered about why this trend exists?"</i>
Information giving	You offered ideas, suggestions, personal experiences, and/or factual data.	<i>"The last time we experienced a drop-off in productivity, offering incentives helped."</i>
Clarifying	You elaborated on or paraphrased the ideas of others, offered illustrations, or tried to increase clarity by decreasing confusion.	<i>"So, what I hear you saying is that we need to take a more direct approach. Did I get that right?"</i>
Coordinating	You summarized ideas and tried to draw various contributions together constructively.	<i>"If we combine each of your ideas, I think we can create a win-win situation."</i>
Evaluating	You evaluated the group's decisions or proposed solutions and helped establish criteria that solutions should meet.	<i>"We agreed that whatever solution we select should be comprehensive, fair, and able to stand the test of time."</i>
Consensus testing	You tested the state of agreement among members to see if the group was approaching a decision.	<i>"Okay. Let's poll the group. In your own words, say what you believe we are agreeing to."</i>
MAINTENANCE-ORIENTED ROLES		
Encouraging	You responded warmly, receptively, and supportively to others and their ideas.	<i>"What a great idea!"</i>
Gatekeeping	You sought to keep channels of communication open by helping reticent members contribute to the group and/or by working to prevent one or two members from dominating.	<i>"Okay. Let's hear how you feel about this too."</i>
Harmonizing	You mediated differences between members, reconciled disagreements, and sought to reduce tension by injecting humor or other forms of relief at appropriate opportunities.	<i>"Let's agree to disagree for now. We can come back to this later."</i>

MAINTENANCE-ORIENTED ROLES (CONTINUED)		
Compromising	You exhibited a willingness to compromise to maintain group cohesion; you were willing to modify your stance or admit an error when appropriate.	<i>"Wow. I'll give you that one. I can see how making the change you suggest will put us in a stronger position."</i>
Standard setting	You assessed the state of member satisfaction with group procedures and indicated the criteria set for evaluating group functioning.	<i>"Let's see how you think we've done today. Did we all come prepared? Are we listening to one another? Are we building on ideas?"</i>
SELF-SERVING ROLES		
Blocking	You were disagreeable and digressed so that nothing was accomplished.	<i>"This is a waste of time. Hey, did you watch the game last night?"</i>
Aggressing	You criticized or blamed others and sought to deflate the egos of other members as a means of enhancing your own status in the group.	<i>"That idea is the worst idea I've ever heard. Can't you think? Can't you be creative? I'm the only one contributing anything worthwhile here."</i>
Recognition seeking	You made yourself the center of attention; you focused attention on yourself rather than the task; you spoke loudly and exhibited unusual or outlandish behavior.	<i>"Am I smart, or what? Did I tell you about the time I won a car?"</i>
Withdrawing	You stopped contributing, appeared indifferent to group efforts, daydreamed, or sulked.	<i>"Whatever you say. I don't care anymore."</i>
Dominating	You insisted on getting your own way; you interrupted others; you sought to impose your ideas and run the group.	<i>"Stop. My solution is the only one worth trying. We don't need to hear any more."</i>
Joking	You engaged in horseplay or exhibited other inappropriate behavior.	<i>"What are you wearing? You look like you just got up. What's with you? Had a late night with Robin?"</i>
Self-confessing	You revealed personal feelings irrelevant to the work of the group.	<i>"I haven't told anyone this. I lied on my job application."</i>
Help-seeking	You played on and tried to elicit the sympathies of other group members.	<i>"Come on. Help me out here. Please also research my part. I'm just overwhelmed right now."</i>

21.2c Leadership Defined

Effective leaders are versatile. They perform combinations of task and maintenance functions designed to move the group closer to its goal.

Task leadership behaviors include establishing an agenda, giving and soliciting information and opinions, offering internal summaries that describe the group's progress, helping to keep the group on track, and helping the group to analyze and evaluate issues and reach a consensus.

Maintenance leadership behaviors include the expression of agreement and support, the reduction and release of group tensions, the resolution of differences of opinion and group conflicts, and the ability to enhance morale and increase member satisfaction.

The leader also must fully comprehend the group's goals and have a clear vision of how to reach them, establishing a group climate that both encourages and stimulates meaningful interaction among group members.

Normally when we think of a group leader, we think of someone who is in an appointed or elected position. However, leadership is not the exclusive possession of any single group member, and a group need not have a designated leader to have leadership. Indeed, groups in which every member feels prepared to share leadership often work best. After all, to lead a group is to influence it. When influence is positive, the group is led toward the realization of its goal. Thus, every member can be thought of as a potential leader, and though a group may not need to have a specific leader to reach its goal, it always requires leadership.⁴

SOLVING PROBLEMS IN GROUPS

The dynamics of a group's development affect the outcomes the group is able to achieve. Although working in groups has both advantages and disadvantages, adhering to a problem solving framework and engaging in brainstorming facilitate the group's realization of its goal(s).

21.3a The Advantages of Group Work

Working in a group has the following advantages:

- **Working in a group facilitates the pooling of resources.** Instead of only one contributor, a number of people with different information and contrasting viewpoints are able to contribute to the decision-making process. Because groups can apply a broader array of knowledge to finding a solution to a problem, an effective solution is more likely to emerge.
- **By working together, groups filter out costly errors before they do any damage.** Because the eyes of a number of persons focus on potential solutions to a problem, weaknesses that any individual might have are detected. Thus, groups can foster superior decision making and better error control.
- **A decision made by a group is usually better received than a decision proposed by an individual** because a number of people worked cooperatively on exploring potential decisions, ultimately agreeing on the best.
- **The act of participating in decision making strengthens the commitment individuals are willing to make to implement the decision.** Participation and motivation are effective problem-solving partners. When working in a group, members are more willing to examine differences openly and to explore compromises.
- **Reaching a decision in a group can be more fulfilling and personally reinforcing than reaching a decision alone.** The feeling of belonging makes a difference.

COACHING TIP

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead

THERE IS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS. YOU DON'T ALWAYS NEED TO GO IT INDEPENDENTLY. YOU DO NEED TO LEARN TO WORK AND PRESENT COLLABORATIVELY. WORKING TOGETHER, YOU OFTEN ACCOMPLISH MORE THAN WORKING ON YOUR OWN. A WELL-FUNCTIONING GROUP ALMOST ALWAYS COMES UP WITH BETTER DECISIONS OR SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS THAN AN INDIVIDUAL WORKING SOLO.

PLAY 21.3

21.3a The Advantages of Group Work

21.3b The Disadvantages of Group Work

21.3c The Decision-Making Framework

21.3d Brainstorming

21.3b The Disadvantages of Group Work

There are potential disadvantages inherent in group work. Unless the group's norms establish that certain counterproductive behaviors will not be tolerated, they could impede effective group functioning. What are these behaviors?

First, sometimes we enter a group with personal objectives that are at odds with the group's goals. As a result, the group's objectives may be sacrificed or sabotaged as we undermine them in an effort to satisfy our personal needs.

Second, there can be too much comfort in numbers. When we know other people are available to assume our responsibilities, we may slack off. By maintaining a low profile we can coast along and be carried by the efforts of other group members.

Third, one or more very vocal, forceful, or powerful members may dominate the group, preventing others from exerting their fair share of influence. By steamrolling over others, these individuals can make it less likely that all members will participate fully or even make their true feelings known.

Fourth, the intransigence of one or more members may make it impossible for the group to reach a consensus. If a group member comes to the group unwilling to listen to other points of view or to compromise, the decision-making process will likely become deadlocked.

Fifth, the group experiences a **risky shift**. It makes a decision that is riskier than an individual working alone would have been comfortable making.

Finally, it takes longer for most groups to make decision than it does individuals. Whether the potential advantages of working in groups outweigh the potential disadvantages depends on how effectively the group is able to perform its tasks.

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At odds. Dysfunction within a group can bring its productivity to a halt.

21.3c The Decision-Making Framework

A group's success depends on both its leadership and its membership. It also depends on the nature of the decision-making system used by the group. One method of organizing the decision-making process that has been shown effective in improving problem-solving is derived from the writings of philosopher and educator John Dewey and is called the **Reflective Thinking Framework**.⁵ (See Figure 21.1.)

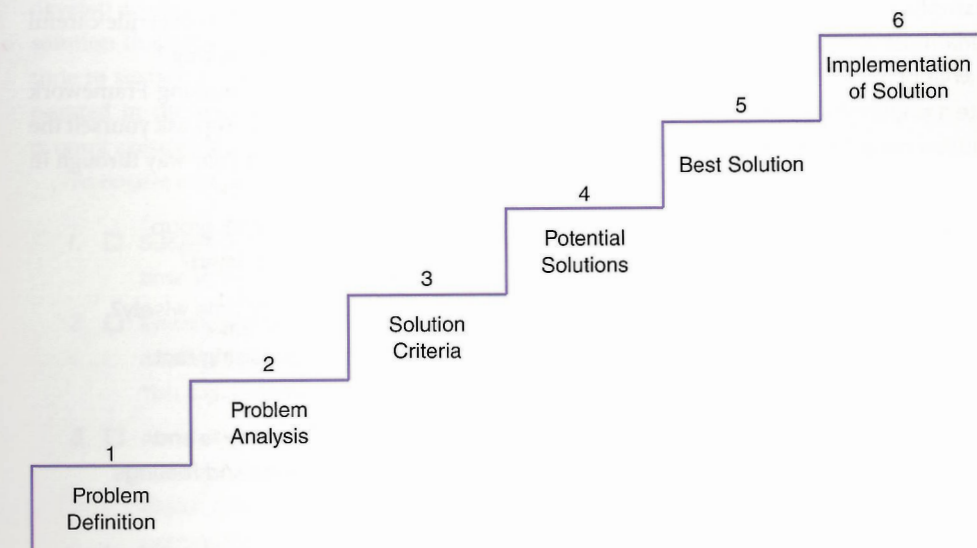


FIGURE 21.1
Reflective Thinking Framework

Source: Adapted from John Dewey, *How We Think* (Boston: MA: Heath, 1910).

The Reflective Thinking Framework consists of six basic steps and offers a sequential and logical system for group discussion. As members work their way through the framework, they must ask and answer a series of questions before advancing to the next stage in the sequence, with the goal of ultimately solving the problem.

- **Step 1. Define the Problem.** Is the problem phrased as a clear and specific question that is not slanted and thus will not arouse defensiveness? Is it phrased so as to allow a wide variety of answers rather than a simple yes or no?
- **Step 2. Analyze the Problem.** What are the facts of the situation? What are its causes? What is its history? How severe is it? Who is affected and how?
- **Step 3. Establish Criteria for Solutions.** What criteria must an acceptable solution fulfill? By what objective standards should we evaluate a solution? What requirements must a solution meet? How critical is each criterion?
- **Step 4. Generate Potential Solutions.** How will each possible solution remedy the problem? How well does each solution meet the established criteria? What advantages or disadvantages does each solution present?
- **Step 5. Select the Best Solution.** How would you rank each solution? Which solution offers the greatest number of advantages and the fewest disadvantages? How can we combine solutions to produce an even better one?
- **Step 6. Suggest Strategies for Implementation.** How can the solution be implemented? What steps should we take to put the solution into effect?

By systematically working through this framework and suspending judgment as they do so, group

members can both keep the discussion on track and improve the quality of decision making, avoiding the potential pitfalls of group work. The Reflective Thinking Framework helps group members avoid **early concurrence**—the tendency to conclude discussion prematurely. By requiring members to explore all data and evaluate alternative courses of action methodically, and by opening them to new information rather than encouraging them to base decisions on what they know at the moment, the system also helps guard against **groupthink**—the tendency to let the desire for consensus override careful analysis and reasoned decision making.⁶

In order for the Reflective Thinking Framework to function effectively for your group, ask yourself the following questions as you work your way through it:

1. □ Are the resources of all group members being well used?
2. □ Is the group using its time wisely?
3. □ Is the group emphasizing fact finding and inquiry?
4. □ Are members listening to and respecting the ideas and feelings of other members?
5. □ Is pressure to conform deemphasized and pressure to search for diverse viewpoints emphasized?
6. □ Is the group's atmosphere supportive, trusting, and cooperative?

Decision-making effectiveness depends on the degree to which group members feel free to speak up, maintain open minds, and exhibit a willingness to search for new information.

21.3d Brainstorming

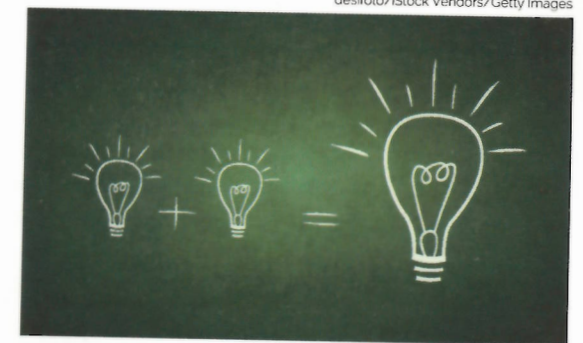
Because brainstorming provides the raw material of ideas, doing it effectively helps the group achieve its goals. Let's see how.

Fresh ideas help solve both old and new problems. Fresh ideas come from unfreezing frozen thought patterns and encouraging new avenues of thought. *Brainstorming*, a system of idea generation devised by Alex Osborn, allows this to happen.⁷ During a brainstorming session all members of a group spontaneously contribute ideas. The group's goal is to collect as many ideas as possible in a short time without interrupting the thought process.

The best way to develop a good solution is to first have lots of ideas. To develop a supply of ideas, however, a problem solver cannot grasp at the first solution that arises, but instead must suspend judgment, giving ideas enough time to surface and flower. Although brainstorming is most frequently incorporated in the solution phase of the Reflective Thinking Framework, it can prompt creative inquiry during any of its stages.

To ensure a successful brainstorming session, follow these guidelines:

1. □ **Suspend judgment.** Brainstorming is not the time to evaluate or criticize ideas.
2. □ **Encourage freewheeling.** Brainstorming is not the time to consider an idea's practicality. In fact, the wilder the idea, the better. You can tame or tone down ideas later if necessary.
3. □ **Aim for quantity of ideas.** Brainstorming is not the time to concentrate on idea quality, nor is it the time to censor any of your ideas. The more ideas you generate, the greater your chances of coming up with a good one.
4. □ **Record all ideas.** Brainstorming is not the time to evaluate or eliminate possibilities. You'll need all the ideas you can come up with.
5. □ **Evaluation occurs only when brainstorming is concluded.** Only after the brainstorming session is over should you evaluate the ideas you proposed for usefulness and applicability.



Brighter ideas. Groups can use brainstorming to discover promising solutions more quickly.

PLAY 21.4

PRESENTING THE GROUP'S WORK

Your group works its way through the Reflective Thinking Framework and comes to a decision. The problem solving you engaged in likely took place in private group meetings and without an audience present. Rarely, however, does the group's work end there. Usually the group is then asked to "go public" and report its findings to another audience (perhaps to your class, the head of your division at work, or even the organization's president) either to inform them of the group's decision, to advocate for the adoption of the group's proposals, or both. Most often, the group presents its findings or recommendations to this other audience through an oral report, a panel discussion, a symposium, or a forum. Let us explore each of these formats in turn.

21.4a The Oral Group Report

21.4b The Panel Discussion

21.4c The Symposium

21.4d The Forum Presentation

21.4a The Oral Group Report

When delivering an oral report of a group's deliberations and conclusions, the speaker's job (and there can be one or more group members who speak) is to inform or persuade the audience. Either the group's leader or chosen spokesperson(s) prepare(s) a speech that describes the group's goals, discusses how the group analyzed the problem, reviews suggested solutions, summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of each solution, and offers the group's decision. The group oral report simply explores how the group approached its subject; topics for group reports vary widely from the art of surfing, to tsunamis, to techniques for improving listening at meetings.

Approach the oral report of group work as you would any other speech. This means your report as a whole should contain three parts: (1) an introduction in which the speaker explains the group's purpose, interests the audience in the group's results, and provides an overview of the main points to be covered; (2) a body in which the speaker describes the problem, explains the criteria for a solution, and the group's reasons for choosing the solution it did; and (3) a conclusion, the opportunity to summarize what you accomplished and urge the acceptance of your group's decision or the adoption of its recommendation(s).

Like any speech, in addition to being well organized, an oral report must be adapted to reflect the needs, concerns, and interests of the people you are addressing, contain an array of supporting materials and evidence (including visual aids, if appropriate), use language that accurately and effectively communicates its content, and, of course, be well rehearsed.

21.4b The Panel Discussion

A panel discussion requires group members to conduct a discussion in front of an audience. The positive and negative aspects of the issues involved in the discussion are debated for the benefit of audience members, although usually without their direct involvement. Thus, the group replays in public the problem-solving discussion it had in private.

In effect, during a panel discussion the audience eavesdrops on exchanges between group members as they discuss the issues. Neither memorized nor scripted, the panel discussion topic is researched and carefully planned so that all group members are able to discuss major issues intelligently.

Most panel discussions also include a moderator who introduces the topic and panelists and ensures that issues raised are explored adequately. The subjects for panel discussions are wide ranging. Panel discussions are held on topics on which panelists have different perspectives involving an issue or controversial topic, openly displaying their conflicts in values or interests. Thus, appropriate topics range from whether smoking marijuana is more or less harmful than drinking alcohol, to the human cost of the war on drugs, and the benefits and drawbacks of Facebook.

COACHING TIP

There are two kinds of people, those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try to be in the first group; there is less competition there.

—Indira Gandhi

DON'T EXPECT OTHERS TO DO YOUR WORK AND GIVE YOU CREDIT FOR THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. THAT'S THE LAZY PERSON'S APPROACH TO GROUP WORK. TOO OFTEN, TOO MANY GROUP MEMBERS DEMONSTRATE THEIR LAZINESS EXPECTING OTHERS TO PULL THEM ALONG WEAKENING THE GROUP BECAUSE OF THEIR RELYING ON OTHERS TO SUPPORT OR CARRY THEIR WEIGHT. SLACKERS NEED TO SHAPE UP OR RISK BEING THE TARGET OF OTHER GROUP MEMBER COMPLAINTS OR EVEN BEING ASKED TO LEAVE THE GROUP.

ASSESS YOUR GROUP'S DEVELOPMENT

If you consider how your group conducted its work, you will realize that it developed in stages, likely moving through these five sequential stages: (1) forming, (2) storming, (3) norming, (4) performing, and (5) adjourning.⁸ As you consider each stage, ask yourself how your group did, and what you could have done better.

1. In the *forming* stage, the members of your group probably experienced some confusion or uncertainty about how the group would function and the roles they would play in it. As the group identified who was in charge and figured out why they were brought together, they probably sought to fit in and have other members perceive them as likeable.
2. During the *storming* stage, members likely experienced some task and relational conflicts because they disagreed or tried to exert themselves in performing roles and clarifying goals. Members were focused on communicating their ideas and opinions and securing their position in the group's power structure.
3. In the *norming* stage the group's structure emerged. Leaders surfaced, and roles were firmed up. Behavior in the group had more predictability as members recongized their interdependence but also their need to cooperate. The group developed a clearer sense of its identity.
4. During the *performing* stage, the focus of the group transitioned to problem solving to accomplish the task. Members built on their skills and knowledge and surmounted hurdles in the effort to realize the group's goals.
5. Finally, during the *adjourning* stage, members reviewed and reflected on what they did and did not accomplish and determined whether and how to end the group.

21.4c The Symposium

A symposium is a discussion in which a number of individuals present individual speeches of approximately the same length on a central subject before the same audience. Because a symposium's speakers address members of the audience directly, there usually is little, if any, interaction among the speakers during their presentations; however, participants may afterward discuss their reactions with each other as well as field questions from the audience.

Symposia are designed to (1) shed light on or explore different aspects of a problem, (2) provide material for subsequent discussion, or (3) review different steps covered during a group's problem-solving experience. Ideally, each speaker is aware of what others will present, so there is little, if any, duplication of information. Symposia are held on a wide range of topics from artificial intelligence or climate change to the best diet or exercise regiment, to the purposes of love, with each selected topic being approached by each speaker from a different viewpoint or disciplinary perspective. Thus, speakers are not in opposition to each other, but rather frame their contributions based on their focus and interests.

21.4d The Forum Presentation

The purpose of a forum is to provide a medium for an open and interactive discussion between the group and an audience on broad-ranging subjects such as the state of popular culture, how to choose a graduate school, or how to serve as a mentor. Unlike the other formats, a forum is a discussion requiring full audience participation. After a moderator and/or each speaker make a brief opening statement, audience members then are free to question the participants, who answer their queries with brief impromptu responses. A town meeting is one example of the forum in action.

A forum works best when there is a moderator to introduce the program and the speakers, as well as to clarify and summarize the program's progress as needed. It also helps when group members are aware of which issues will be discussed during the forum and are knowledgeable about the subject, because they can then prepare themselves to respond to questions quickly and thoroughly.

GAME PLAN PRESENTING IN GROUPS

- WE HAVE DESIGNATED ONE OF OUR MEMBERS AS THE LEADER WHO WILL COORDINATE THE ORDER IN WHICH WE SPEAK.
- I UNDERSTAND THE GOAL OF OUR PRESENTATION, AND I UNDERSTAND MY OWN ROLE WITHIN THE GROUP.
- I KNOW WHO WILL SPEAK BEFORE AND AFTER ME AND I AM PREPARED TO TRANSITION FROM AND TO THOSE INDIVIDUALS.
- OUR GROUP WORKED WELL TOGETHER, AND WE TACKLED OUR TOPIC USING THE REFLECTIVE THINKING FRAMEWORK.

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WORKOUT EXERCISES

PLANNING AND PRESENTING IN A GROUP

Planning and presenting in a group poses unique challenges. By participating in the following activities you can further develop the skills and understandings needed to succeed as both group member and leader.

1. Getting to Know You

Building on this opening line, "Once upon a time, there was a group of college students who decided to get to know each other better by sharing their work habits and strengths," reveal something about yourself others in your group should know in order for you to perform your best when working with them.

2. Assessing Group Interaction in the Media

Mediated forms of group discourse have grown in popularity over the years. The increasing number of hours devoted to talk radio programs, as well as the opinion and interview shows that populate the offerings of twenty-four-hour cable news networks, weekend morning network broadcasts, and afternoons programming such as *The Talk*, *Dr. Phil*, and *Maury Povich* testify to this. But instead of engaging in reasoned debate, hosts and guests on some programs engage in uncivil wars characterized by escalating levels of conflict. What lessons can we learn from such programs? How can we use them to help us develop into more effective discussion group members?

Just as you need to evaluate the effectiveness of your own fact-finding and decision-making groups, so you also need to become an evaluator of mediated discussion groups by assessing both their methods and their conclusions. In an effort to identify the shoulds and should nots of host and guest behavior during mediated discussions, using any mediated discussion offering of your choice, answer the following questions:

1. Was the program's topic well analyzed by participants?
2. Were both host and guests free to share ideas and feelings?
3. Did guests or host seek to monopolize discussion?
4. Did host or guests become aggressive or abusive?
5. What did the program's host and guests do to handle any conflicts that developed?
6. Were claims made by the host or guests supported by evidence?
7. What norms appeared to govern the discussion?
8. What were the program's outcomes? Did a consensus emerge?
9. What was learned?
10. What recommendations would you make to the show's host and guests regarding the shoulds and should nots of their on-air behavior? What communication skills would both host and guests need to possess in order to put your recommendations into practice?



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3. Brainstorming Your Way to Consensus

First read the research findings summarized following these instructions. Then brainstorm possible rationales for the statistics presented. Attempt to reach consensus as to which rationale is most likely. Once discussion is over, appoint a member to present the group's conclusions to the class:

Though it is legend that it does, chivalry does not appear to rule at sea. According to a recent study, in sixteen maritime shipwrecks dating from 1852 to 2011 two times as many men have survived the disasters as women. What is more, 18.7 percent more crew survived than passengers.⁹

Use the following **CHECKLIST** to analyze how effectively your group did discussing its task.

1. Did the group define the problem?
2. Did the group thoroughly analyze the problem?
3. Did the group brainstorm to generate a wide range of possible rationales in support of the statistical findings?
4. Did the group evaluate each rationale carefully?
5. Did the group succeed in reaching a consensus with regard to the most likely rationale?

4. Analyze a Group Presentation

Attend a panel discussion, symposium, or forum on campus or in the community. Evaluate how well the moderator and group participants fulfilled their respective functions.

5. Approach the Speaker's Stand

Your instructor will divide you into small groups. Your assignment is to identify and formulate a question of fact, value, or policy for your group to discuss. Then using the Reflective Thinking Format, conduct a group discussion on your chosen question. Be sure to outline exactly what you hope to accomplish during each stage of the sequence.

After you complete your discussion, prepare a brief paper explaining your group's accomplishments and identifying obstacles overcome while completing your task. Also analyze the qualities of leadership, membership, and decision making experienced by your group.

Finally, your instructor will ask you to use one or more of the following formats to present your findings to the class: a panel discussion, an oral report, a symposium, or a forum presentation.

RECAP AND REVIEW

1. **Define and identify characteristics of a small group.** A small group contains a limited number of people who communicate with each other over a period of time, usually face to face, to make decisions and accomplish specific goals. All members of a group have the potential to influence all other members and are expected to function as both speaker and receiver.
2. **Compare and contrast speaking individually with speaking and presenting in groups.** In contrast to an individual speech in which the audience is focused on a solo speaker, a group presentation involves interaction among multiple speakers and listeners. As part of a group, members need to organize themselves and their information to present a unified vision to an audience.
3. **Demonstrate how group leaders and members contribute to or detract from a group's effectiveness.** Every group defines its own objectives, norms, and operating climate. More successful groups have a number of major attributes that distinguish them: in

- particular, these are effective leadership, effective membership, and the nature of the decision-making system the group uses.
4. **Use the Reflective Thinking Framework.** The Reflective Thinking Framework involves six steps: (1) problem definition, (2) problem analysis, (3) the establishment of solution criteria, (4) the generation of solutions, (5) the selection of the best solution, and (6) strategies for implementation.
 5. **Use brainstorming to facilitate group problem solving.** Brainstorming is an idea generation system during which group members suspend judgment, encourage freewheeling, aim for quantity of ideas, and record all ideas. Group members evaluate ideas produced during brainstorming after the brainstorming session concludes.
 6. **Participate in a group presentation.** In many instances, after a group reaches a decision or solves a problem, the group presents its findings to others through an oral report, a panel discussion, a symposium, or a forum.

KEY TERMS

Decision-making group 440
Early concurrence 450
Fact-finding group 440
Groupthink 450

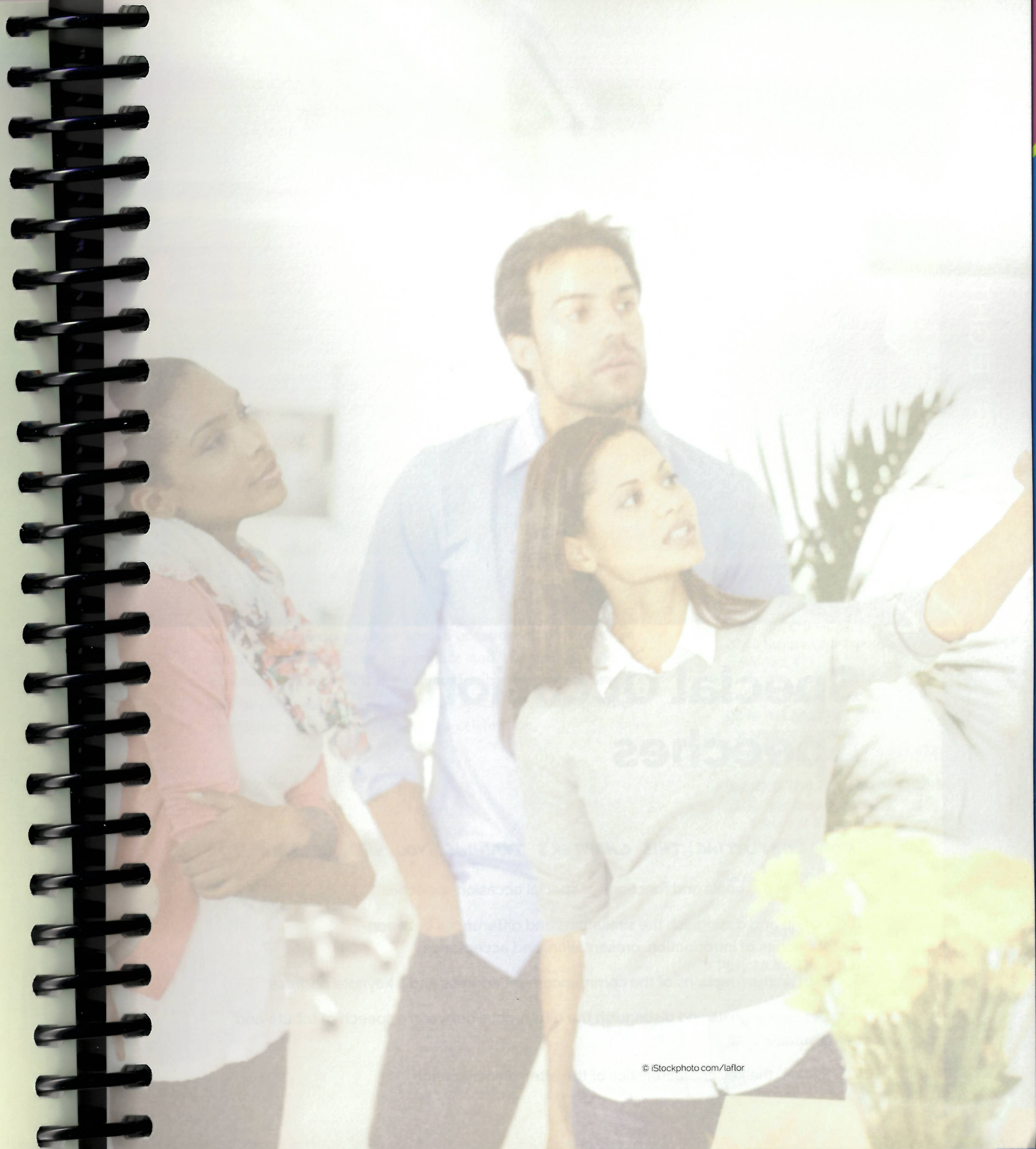
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