

Speaking and Listening Assessment Project Lesson Plans

Small Group Communication

This is intended as the fourth unit in a high school level communication course and is designed to help students understand the importance of working in groups and small group communication.

Probable Length: Two weeks of standard class periods

Illinois State Goals/Standards Covered: ELA Goal 4, Standard A, Benchmark 4A4a.
ELA Goal 4, Standard B, Benchmark 4B4b.
ELA Goal 4, Standard B, Benchmark 4B4d.
ELA Goal 4, Standard B, Benchmark 4B5b.
ELA Goal 4, Standard B, Benchmark 4B5d.

Knowledge Objectives: After this unit students should know how to:

1. Define the characteristics of a small group.
2. Discuss the types of groups that exist.
3. Identify the stages of small group communication.
4. Define the different types of discussion formats.
5. Discuss differences in communication in small groups.
6. Identify the Small Group Communication Model

Behavior Objectives: After this unit students be able to:

1. Illustrate the roles and functions of group members.
2. Demonstrate strategies to minimize group conflict.
3. Illustrate various decision-making techniques.
4. Demonstrate ways to make groups more productive.
5. Present a variety of projects in a Small Group setting.
6. Recognize instances of group think as well as demonstrate ways to overcome it.

Content:

- A. What is Small Group Communication?
 1. Directly observable characteristics
 - a. Communication
 - b. Space
 - c. Time
 - d. Size
 2. Indirectly observable characteristics
 - a. Interdependence

- b. Norms
- c. Structural patterns
- d. Goals
- e. Perceptions

B. Why study Small Group Communication?

- 1. Live and work in groups
 - a. Academic
 - b. Cultural
 - c. Corporate
- 2. Bridge to student activity: **Belonging to Groups**

C. Small Group Communication Model

- 1. Bridge to student activity: **Keirsey Personality Test**
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D. Group Standards

- 1. Commitment to:
 - a. Doing your best
 - b. The group good
 - c. Rationality
 - d. Fair play
 - e. Good listening
 - f. Preparation
 - g. Ideational conflict
 - h. Objectivity
 - i. Tolerance
 - j. Social maturity
- 2. Deviant behaviors
 - a. Aggressing
 - b. Doormatting
 - c. Eggheading
 - d. Air heading
 - e. Whinning
 - f. Self-confessing
 - g. Help seeking
 - h. Recognition seeking
 - i. Special interest pleading
 - j. Playing the clown
 - k. Blocking
 - l. Foddering
- 3. Bridge to student activity: **Group Standards**

E. Five Types of Groups

- 1. Long-standing work groups
- 2. Projects groups
- 3. Pre-fab work groups
- 4. Quality circles
- 5. Cyborg-decision making groups

F. Roles to be fulfilled in small groups

1. Task leader
2. Social emotional leader
3. Information provider
4. Tension releaser
5. Central negative
6. Other roles found within groups:
 - a. Questioner
 - b. Silent observer
 - c. Recorder
 - d. Active listener
 - e. Self centered follower

G. Group Stages

2. Orientation (task) and Primary tension (role)
3. Conflict (task) and Secondary tension (role)
4. Emergence (task) and Recurring tension (role)
5. Reinforcement

H. Group Skills

1. Problem solving skills
2. Role playing skills
3. Trust building skills
4. Team building skills

I. Discussion Formats

1. Roundtable
2. Symposium
3. Panel discussion
4. Forum types
5. Colloquy
6. Parliamentary procedure
7. Bridge to group activity: **School Issues**

J. Decision Making Techniques

1. Nominal Group Discussion (NGD)
2. Delphi Technique
3. Brainstorming
4. Buzz Groups
5. Single question
6. Ideal solution
7. PERT
8. Focus group interview
9. Bridge to student activity: **Town Renewal**

K. Difference in Communication

1. Gender
2. Culture/Race
3. Age
4. Education
5. Occupation

6. Income
 7. Homogeneity/Heterogeneity
 8. Bridge to student activity: **Mixer**
- L. Increasing Group Productivity
1. Stress productivity
 2. Perform leader role when needed
 3. Assist on procedure
 4. Energize
 5. Compromise
 6. Encourage
 7. Observe
 8. Avoid self centered follower role
 9. Maintain role stability
 10. Rescue roles
- M. Group Think Bridge to student activity: **“Malcolm in the Middle”**
or “12 Angry Men”
- N. Ways to Assess small groups
1. Self report
 2. Observation
 3. Direct measurement

Assessment:

Resources:

Cragan, John F., & Wright, David W. (1999). *Communication in Small Groups: Theory, Process, Skills* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.