

Teaching under the Influence of PA Colleagues

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Two presentations at the 2005 Teaching Public Administration Conference influenced the way I taught an MPA summer school elective *Teams and Team Work* at Boise State University. Keith Revell from Florida International University described a course packed full of exercises, simulations, and games in his presentation “Leadership Can’t Be Taught.” Bob Cunningham from the University of Tennessee involved participants in a simulation of his course in human resources that requires the entire class to function as an organization.

This paper describes the experiential approach I took in teaching an elective course *Teams and Team Work* as influenced by Revell’s presentation and details the logistical plan for the class as influenced by Cunningham’s simulation. Then, the paper explores some of the intended and unintended consequences of the course directly attributable to the experiential learning approach and the class organization.

Course Content and Approach

In his presentation at the 2005 Teaching Public Administration Conference, Keith Revell revealed his startling viewpoint: Leadership cannot be taught as we have traditionally approached it through reading, case studies, discussion, papers, and tests. Revell relied on experiential learning in exercises, games, and simulations as the vehicle for teaching and learning about leadership. I was familiar with many of the exercises and games he mentioned—and most of them seemed to have as much relevance to team work as they did to leadership. Eureka!

Back home, I accumulated piles of books and articles containing exercises, simulations, and games relevant to teams and team work. For several months, I studied these, matching them

as best I could with theoretical elements in the texts for the course, *TeamWork: What Must Go Right/What Can Go Wrong* by Larson and LaFasto (1989) and *The Wisdom of Teams* by Katzenbach and Smith (1993). Appendix 1 contains references for the texts and sources for exercises, simulations, and games.

The topic of teams and team work was not new to me, but taking an experiential approach for the majority of class time was a radical idea. Abandon *lecturing*?! *Discussing* the material?! In the past, I used a lively mix of exercises, games, and instructional videotapes to supplement a lecture-discussion format. However, I have long suspected the skills and knowledge of teams and team work can not be taught or learned this way. I have also long suspected that most team building workshops and seminars lack substantial conceptual grounding and hence provide participants with little more than entertainment. In fact, I believe that many times training programs aimed at intact teams conceal larger organizational issues such as a poor organizational performance ethic, power and politics, incentive structures that reward individual performance only, and norms stressing competition and rugged individualism.

Another idea kept niggling in the back of my brain—that effective team work involves a set of teachable, learnable skills and competencies that reside in individuals, not in groups or teams. As such, I had given thought to approaching teaching team work skills and knowledge much like we teach other skills and knowledge—assertiveness, negotiation, listening, and public speaking for example.

Revell's presentation stirred my imagination. I began to envision a *Teams and Team Work* course that involved students in a broad variety of experiential learning activities in teams of two to twenty with the target always being the individual learner. I imagined brilliant debriefing sessions in which students conceptually linked what they experienced in exercises,

simulations, and games to information they gleaned from the texts. I envisioned silent reflection periods in which students jotted down their thoughts and questions. I imagined students writing journals to explore their individual experiences and integrate these conceptually with reading materials. I thought about succinct mini-lectures that highlighted the core concepts of a topic, relating these to the experiential learning. I anticipated the emotional arousal that experiential learning tends to produce, and wondered about the possibility of enhancing emotional intelligence.

Cunningham's simulation induced other fantasies—involving class members in the administrative duties that typically fall to instructors and adding other enriching features to the class that are administrative in nature.

I've often heard, "Be careful what you ask for." The results of my dreaming came to fruition within four months.

Class Logistics

Twenty brave souls enrolled in *Teams and Teamwork*, a three-credit elective course in the MPA curriculum offered during the three-week interval between spring semester and summer school. Class met Monday through Thursday evenings from 5:30-9:10 p.m. As soon as students registered, they had access to the syllabus on Blackboard and could start reading and workbook assignments.

Workbook Assignment

Many students submitted completed workbooks before the first class session. Each workbook contained chapter summaries with key information missing. Students added the missing information in a colored font or highlighted it. The workbooks served as an

accountability tool in two ways. Completed workbooks assured me students had read the text and signaled the students what I considered key information to understand and retain.

Recruitment and Orientation Brochure

To recruit and orient students, I disseminated a brochure describing the course (see Appendix 2). Everyone knew this would not be a “chalk and talk” lecture course, a “read and report” program, or a “case study” seminar. Those who registered for the course more or less knew what they were getting into. Their initial anticipations varied from enthusiastic to skeptical.

Student Demographics

Eleven were MPA students, four were MBAs, four were in the Master of Accountancy program, and one was in the Master of Engineering program. Fifteen were women and five were men; their ages ranged from 24 to 40. Nineteen worked full time and one was looking for work while managing consulting projects. Several were taking their first MPA class and several were taking one of their last MPA classes. One MBA student was Korean American and two MPA students were Hispanic.

Roles for Class Members

I began class by reviewing a handout, “Roles for Class Members” (see Appendix 3). This document described various roles and duties for students to assume for credit during the course. I called for a volunteer to serve as General Manager, and, after a few awkward moments of silence in which almost all eyes were down, an MBA student spoke up and said she would do the job. I asked her to fill the remaining role positions and I sat down—a clear signal she was in charge. The General Manager assumed authority and managed the task, as the rest of the students quickly figured out what they wanted to do. The process was one of organized chaos, as students accepted and swapped roles, and took into consideration everyone’s needs and

preferences. Fifteen minutes into the session, the twenty students had formed an organization that would administer the class.

I distributed file folders to students who took on particular roles, indicated that the Attendance Officer should take attendance by the end of the session, invited the Human Resource Manager to lead the class in forming initial ground rules, and asked the Scribe to flip chart ideas. More awkwardness followed as all the newcomers—most of them complete strangers—struggled to create rules of order and adopt them.

Routine to Expect

Once ground rules were adopted, I distributed “Routine to Expect” (See Appendix 4.) This document clarified the likely sequence of events that would happen during each class session. For example, prior to class students were responsible for checking in with the Attendance Officer, donning their nametags and role tags, taking care of their duties, and having their “butt in the seat”—a technical term I learned from my local Chamber of Commerce executive—by 5:29 precisely. The General Manager called class to order and asked for the quote of the day to open the class session. The routine continued with warm-up exercises and a three minute reflection period. The next thing to take place was either a mini-lecture or an experiential learning activity. Always, a debriefing session and silent reflection period followed experiential learning activities. A fifteen-minute break occurred somewhere around 7:00 p.m., followed by the General Manager’s call to order and a second quote of the day. More experiential activities, debriefing, reflection periods, and mini-lectures with questions and answers continued through the session, with a second short break around 8:00 p.m. A termination routine included an 8:55 p.m. time warning from the General Manager and a 9:00 p.m. call for feedback cards from the

Feedback Coordinator. At 9:05 p.m. the General Manager asked students to share their “best learning” of the session. At 9:10 sharp, class ended.

On the first night of class, students made nametags and those on duty attached role tags to their name tags. Only then did I review the syllabus—and only by asking if anyone needed clarification or interpretation. In less than 30 minutes, we were on our feet doing a warm-up exercise. When I called the long break, the General Manager reminded the Quote of the Day Coordinator, the Wellness Coordinator, the Scribe, and the Personnel Manager of their duties and suggested they take care of these during break. They did.

It was Bob Cunningham’s presentation at the 2005 Teaching Public Administration Conference that directly influenced “Roles for Class Members” and “Routine to Expect.” Never before had I delegated such responsibility to students, nor had I disciplined myself and students to such a rigorous format.

Some Intended Consequences

Efficiency and Student Involvement

Many hoped-for outcomes occurred. The class roles introduced efficiency and a level of student involvement that exceeded my expectations. Students took their roles seriously and performed them well. Taking on tasks seemed to energize everyone: about a third of the class had something to talk about with others, some duty they had to perform, a reason to come to class early. All eventually contributed to the collective.

Some things are best known by their absence: here are a few—taking attendance, collecting and distributing papers, hushing everyone to start class, keeping time, enforcing ground rules, herding everyone back from break, and making up a class roster.

Other things are best known by their presence. Many students showed up at the classroom by 5:10 p.m. or 5:15 p.m. when Schlep and I arrived to set up. Refreshments were laid out—coffee, bottled water, healthy treats, and decadent treats—surely this was a draw. Students came to class on time and I was diligent about ending class exactly as the “Routine to Expect” handout indicated.

The novelty of a class with at least 85% of the time devoted to experiential learning resulted in what can only be described as a “high:” faces flushed, muscle tonus, eyes and ears alert to instruction and then to interactions—these were a few clues about emotional state. Student conversations at break and before and after class were mostly continuations of debriefing sessions.

Silent Reflection Periods

The rationale for silent reflection periods was to give introverts time and space to think things through—and to force extroverts to do the same. Since writing journals was a course requirement, students used the silent reflection time to jot down highlights of the debriefing discussions and to add their own ideas and questions. No doubt, silent reflection periods were a welcome respite that allowed students to relax and re-group, away from the intensity of exercises and games.

Nametags and Role Tags

It was mandatory for students to wear nametags during all class sessions, and role tags when they were on duty. It was important to call people by name during exercises and debriefing periods.

Ground Rules and the Human Resource Manager

The HR Manager's job included emailing ground rules to everyone; posting them during every class session; receiving requests from class members for additions, deletions, or changes to the rules; presenting these to class for consideration; and revising them online and on the class poster. The HR Manager's hardest job would have been pointing out violation of a ground rule during class and requesting compliance, but this never occurred. Students were willing to abide by the rules they agreed to.

Feedback: Plusses and Wishes

The Feedback Coordinator distributed a supply of Feedback Forms to each student—one for each session. The forms called for “plusses” in one column and “wishes” in another. At 9:00 p.m. the Feedback Coordinator asked everyone to complete and submit their feedback forms. Within 12 hours, the coordinator emailed a verbatim report to class members and the professor and by noon I posted Announcements on Blackboard, always addressing the plusses (what student like, appreciated, and wanted to be continued) and wishes (positive statements about what students would prefer, or like to see happen). I also verbally addressed the previous session's feedback at the beginning of class. Because all of the feedback was in the form of positive statements, I was eager to bring about conditions or actions students desired. Interestingly, the volume of both plusses and wishes diminished dramatically from the first session to the fourth, and after that, students wrote an average of only three or four plusses and one or two wishes per session.

The feedback process accomplished two important objectives. First, I received timely information that allowed me to adjust daily to what students wished for, or to let them know what was beyond my ability to effect. Second, the daily practice modeled the process of effective

feedback. The form requested both reinforcing feedback (positive) and change-oriented (negative) feedback. Students wrote constructive, positive statements that were concrete and specific about behaviors, conditions or situations. The channels for both feedback and response were routine, predictable, known, and accessible to everyone. Giving and receiving feedback that reinforces or redirects is an essential skill of effective teamwork.

Quote of the Day

A quote of the day started each class session, and each return from the long break. Every student eventually shared a quote and explained what it meant to him or her. The quotes brought the class to attention and set the tone for the session.

Food and Drink

Refreshments would have been justified due to three hour and forty minutes long class alone, but hydration, nutrition, and caffeine boosts aside, there was something communal and satisfying about grabbing another bottle of water or another handful of pretzels throughout the evening. Sharing food had a clear social value: it was a way for individuals to express identity (favorite foods, family salsa, strawberries from one's garden) and to express themes reflective of the class's developing culture (cupcakes decorated with "Yes" and "No" after the Yes-No exercise).

Manager and Biographies

By the end of the first week, the Personnel Manager compiled a biography of each class member and a class roster. I posted these on Blackboard. The biographies allowed students to know and appreciate each other, and phone numbers on the roster provided students with several ways to contact each other.

Mini-lectures

My goal was to highlight the most important theoretical insights from the assigned reading in no more than 10-12 minutes. I made one exception to this, giving fair warning ahead of time. The mini-lectures forced me to be very clear and concise. This was not easy.

Some Unintended Consequences

Many things happened during this class that I would never have predicted. Some of these required me to change my plans; others were serendipitous—benefits to learning that cannot be planned or managed. My intention was that we learn from whatever happens.

Master's Students: All Leaders, No Followers

I learned that this class of masters' students aspired to be leaders and abhorred being followers.

Nearly one third of the way through the class, I introduced The Matrix exercise. All twenty students understood the task involved trial and error learning, and two clearly articulated strategies that would ensure a minimum of repeat errors. The class rejected both plans, claiming the “techno-weenie” tactics were too rigid and confining. And so, they approached the task as individuals—not as a team. Having the opportunity to step on the right square and be a hero was more important than completing the exercise in a timely manner and more important than eliminating repeat errors. The class cheered for heroes and jeered those who made repeat errors—never mind there was to be no talking while anyone was on the Matrix. Given two opportunities to reconsider their strategy, the so-called “team” of twenty declined. Thank you, no.

During the debriefing, no one wanted to hear the class did not work as a team, took twice as long as usual, and made a large number of unnecessary repeat errors. They defended their

individualistic approach to the task—after all, they finished! The two who had suggested strategies were silent.

The following evening, I observed the same dynamic: class members competed to be stars or heroes. Who would be recognized? Whose idea could prevail? Who could come up with the most clever or unusual idea? Who could dominate? At the end of the class session, I asked how many people had put aside their own agenda, even one time, to get behind someone else to help that person accomplish his or her idea. Not one hand went up.

I fretted away most of a weekend, unable to believe that in a *Teams and Teamwork* course, one third the way through, we had only rugged individualists. Teaching cooperation and collaboration was harder than I expected, and the exercises so far were no match for strength of the egos in this class. I finally re-grouped with a new plan for the following session. An exercise that made no sense to me when I initially read it would meet my new, previously unplanned objective: turning leaders into followers.

Turning Leaders into Followers

Five outsiders with serious faces and nametags sat to the side of the room the following Monday evening when students arrived. I asked the class to form teams of four and one outsider observed each team and fined teams that broke any rules during the Egg Drop exercise. I explained: leaders would design a container that would hold a raw egg, so that when the container was dropped eight feet, the egg would remain intact. Team members would be workers who carry out the leader's plan. To be successful, the product had to protect the egg, and the team had to come in under time and under budget. If a leader touched materials or if a worker suggested an idea, the observer would fine the team.

I gave leaders instruction sheets and a requisition sheets and the workers went to their respective rooms to wait. I served as storekeeper and sold teams the materials they requisitioned.

When construction time was up, we gathered in the classroom to test the containers. (Only one egg broke—that team took ten minutes rather than the allotted thirty to build its container.) Then, I asked each team to debrief its experience in a fishbowl. The first team gave themselves brief accolades; then the observer provided descriptive data that refuted the accolades. She focused on the leader and each worker in turn, detailing specific behaviors and their effect on other team members and the team's work. The silence in the room was deafening. All I could think was, "This is why I needed outsiders. These four students are hearing exactly what they need to hear about their behavior; I could never have done this myself." Subsequently, teams tried to pre-empt their observers by rigorously examining their leaders' and workers' behaviors. Some teams allowed their leaders to lead, but others resisted being followers. One team had a leader who had exhibited exemplary skills, but the team failed to recognize them. That team's observer caught all the details and nuances; listening to him was like hearing a guru expound on the principles of effective leadership.

After the debriefing, the outsiders introduced themselves informally, detailed their education and current employment. All were former students of mine in team building and/or group dynamics classes; I carefully chose these people for their abilities as process observers. When they left, we had a very long break.

Three more exercises awaited the students—exercises in which one person was designated leader and the others workers. Leaders showed an unprecedented attunement to followers during the exercises; they worked hard to understand followers' task and personal needs and meet them. In the debriefing discussions, followers gave balanced feedback to their

leaders about behaviors that helped and hindered them; and leaders expressed humility and appreciation to followers.

Forced follower-ship exercises—those I thought antithetical to teams and team work—created insightful learning among Master’s students who ONLY wanted to be leaders.

The Defenders: Make Up Some B.S. and Argue Like Mad

I learned what graduate students have best learned to do: make us some B.S. and argue like mad.

Following the High Jump exercise I asked the class why the two teams might have performed differently. (One score was +8 and the other was -5). They offered cockamamie, hare-brained explanations and quickly turned these opposing explanations into an argument. I let them argue themselves into entrenched positions before I read the different sets of instructions the teams received. After a brief confusion state settled in, discussion of the effects of self-fulfilling prophecies, positive psychology, and field dependence/independence proved enlightening and satisfying.

Cat Fight! Cat Fight!

I learned how uncomfortable unexpected conflict can be and how ill-prepared students were to engage constructively

All twenty students seemed to be talking at once as they considered strategies for crossing Toxic River. Then came that horrible moment referred to later as “the incident.” One woman told another woman across the room to shut up so she could hear what those near her were saying. As two reddened and glared at each other, several men stepped back three or four steps hooting, “Cat fight! Cat fight!” The incident precipitated the class as a whole discussing how they could get multiple inputs—and they eventually figured out they could break a group of

twenty into four groups of five, brainstorm, report out, and reach decisions among groups.

Fallout from the incident was evident during the Toxic River exercise: several students clowned around in an attempt to deflect attention from the dreaded incident and others strained to break the rules of the game with creative approaches to the task. During the debriefing, no one mentioned the incident. The two women avoid each other entirely, and I overheard several of the men use the words “cat fight” during break and after class talking among themselves and to women other than those involved in the incident.

I learned that after the following evening’s class, the two women talked in the parking lot from 9:15 until 11:00 p.m. They came to class the next day with an agenda and asked for time to address it after quote of the day. They began by disclosing what they learned as a result of the incident and their long conversation in the parking lot. They invited the men who yelled “cat fight,” as well as the rest of the class, to disclose and explore their thoughts and feelings. This discussion took the class as a whole to a new level of trust, openness, respect, and risk-taking as they explored the conflict and their reactions to it.

As inevitable conflicts arose in subsequent exercises and games, many students chose to engage instead of disengage, listen to understand as well as to persuade, and stay connected and agreeable while disagreeing.

The Dumbest Exercises Create the Smartest Learning

I learned that the dumb exercises can create the smart learning.

Teams of five received a twelve foot length of rope and instructions to form the rope into a perfect circle on the floor without talking. My job was to walk around and offer constructive criticism. In addition to the circle, teams eventually tried to form squares, triangles, and

hexagons. The rope was cheap—from the Dollar Store—and it was plastic. It would not lie flat on the floor, bend into a graceful circle, or make a square with crisp corners.

Well into the exercise, a new MPA student began loudly objecting to the game. I could not understand what she was saying, but rushed to her side and reminded her, “This is a nonverbal exercise.” Her objections escalated in pitch, volume, and speed; I could not tell if she was angry or just being funny, so I told her, “This is insubordination, and I won’t have it.” A tall, large, athletic man stepped in front of me and said, “You can’t talk to her like that.” I looked him in the eye and replied, “YOU are being insubordinate too and this is unacceptable.” With that, I turned and walked away. They resumed work quietly.

During the debriefing, the woman vented, “dropped the f-bomb” (as she called it later), and caught herself—too late and aghast. In that critical moment of silence, I burst into laughter and told her, “I love your energy!” The whole class exploded into laughter and chatter. The woman relaxed some and went on with her objections to the exercise—inadequate materials, impossible expectations, and criticism upon criticism. An excellent debriefing occurred because there were so many different responses to the impossible task, the inadequate materials, and me as the manager who walked around criticizing.

Two weeks after class ended, the woman emailed me her insight. At the time, she was aware of reacting only to the exercise; however, the following day, she realized her outburst and intense level of frustration and anger was really about her job situation. The rope exercise replicated conditions she lived with every day. She quit her job and found a new one—knowing what mattered most to her in employment conditions.

They Learn What They Most Need To Learn

Students' journals disclosed what they most need to learn. I learned that what I am teaching provides a doorway to that learning—or sometimes a secret passageway.

A Yes-No exercise was powerful enough to cause one student to freeze mute on the spot, tearing up, but to write pages about what this meant in her journal. Trust was a common theme with many variations—for example: trusting one's own competence; trusting others' competence; trusting others to be responsible and mutually accountable; and trusting authority figures. Other frequently explored topics included: being patient and giving others solution space; balancing listening to understand with speaking to be understood; and when is help helpful and when is it a hindrance? Several students realized they had been part of effective teams that were never identified as teams and most realized they had worked on teams that were teams in name only.

Just-in-time Trainers

I told the students to wear old clothes the last night. When they arrived, I introduced the architect who would be a just-in-time-trainer for the evening, along with the student in engineering who chose to be a consultant in lieu of working on a team. The five men in the class demanded they be a team, as they had not had the chance to work together. I asked if someone wanted to be the sixth on their team and someone volunteered. Hence, teams of six formed and received the challenge: build a structure out of newspaper, large enough for all six of you stand up in. The teams worked in separate rooms with newspaper, masking tape, a dowel and a yardstick.

Each team had access to the architect and engineer during the thirty-minute planning period and the two-and-a-half-hour construction phase. Two teams made extensive use of the just-in-time trainers, but the third team (the five men and one woman) turned away the architect

and the engineer. They did not need or want input. As a result, they built their structure based on rectangles while the other teams made use of triangles—the more stable structural configuration recommended by the architect and engineer.

As the evening pressed on, many unanticipated events occurred. One team ran out of masking tape and called a friend to bring more. They told me, and I asked if they'd ordered tape for all three groups. "Uh, right on it," one said. The tape arrived within ten minutes! The mostly-male team created a very specific division of labor, but the other teams multi-tasked and did what needed to be done moment-to-moment. The engineer ran to me at one point and said, "You'd better go see..." and we caught the last of a tirade by one of the men regarding how two others were screwing things up. After this, the team posted the woman at the door as guard and refused to allow architect, engineer or professor to enter their room. (We eventually went in, bearing more masking tape as the excuse.) We observed conflicts in one of the all-women teams, where silence and distance pulsated with suggestions and closeness in a palpable rhythm. The third group expressed conflict only in play; for example, I observed three people sitting cross-legged on the floor throw two-foot struts at a fourth one. "What's this?" she yelled, surprised. "The struts you asked for a minute ago," the other said in unison. This team remained calm and congenial; addressing conflict in questions and answers to get everyone's input, or teasing and playing with options.

I had no idea how long it would take to build the structure or how technically involved building the newspaper structures would be. Six people worked two-and-a-half hours each; that is a total of twenty one hours of labor on each structure. The involvement was so intense that no one took a break: people went out to the hall, grabbed food and drinks for themselves and others,

and disappeared back into their rooms; they literally ran to and from the bathrooms. The architect was so impressed with the process and the products that he took nearly 60 photos.

During the debriefing, I asked the architect and engineer to evaluate each structure based on structural criteria. They dispensed with that in less than two minutes and described instead what excited them most: team dynamic including collaboration; co-operation; division of labor or the lack of it; multi-tasking; conflict management; creativity; innovation; just-in-time-learning; failure and learning; emotions; and gender differences in communication style, work approach, and humor.

Conclusions

A quote by T.S. Eliot surmises the last moments of the class, “What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from.” Forty-five hours of intense experiential learning opened up many more learning agendas than it satisfied. And that is satisfying.

Appendix 1

References for Textbooks and Sources for Experiential Learning Activities

Textbooks

Katzenbach, J. R., & Smith, D. K. (1993). *The wisdom of teams: Creating the high-performance organization*. New York, NY: Harper Business.

Larson, C.E., & LaFasto, F.M.J. (1989). *TeamWork: What must go right, what can go wrong?* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Sources for Experiential Learning Activities

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De Janasz, S.C., K. Dowd & B.Z. Schneider (2006). *Interpersonal skills in organizations*. Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.

Gluegelman, A., ed., (1976). *The new games book*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc.

Johnson, D.W. & F.P. Johnson (2003). *Joining together: Group theory and group skills*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Kroehnert, G. (). *100 training games*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Newstrom, J. & E. Scannell (). *The big book of team building games*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Pfeiffer, J. W. & J.E. Jones, eds. (1969-1971). *A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training, Vol. 1-3*: Iowa City, Iowa: University Associates Press.

Pfeiffer, J. W., ed., (1972-1996). *Annual (Training)*. San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Company.

Pfeiffer, J.W., ed., (1997-2005). *Annual (Training)*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Pfeiffer, J. W. & C. Nolde, eds. (1991) *The encyclopedia of team-building activities*. San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Company.

Thiagarajan, S. & G. Parker (1999). *Team work and team play*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Appendix 2

A Brochure for Recruiting and Orienting Students



Course Meets

1st three-week summer session 2005
MTuWTh 5:30-9:10 p.m.
May 16-June 2 (except Memorial Day)

Learning Outcomes

As a result of completing this course, you will be able to:

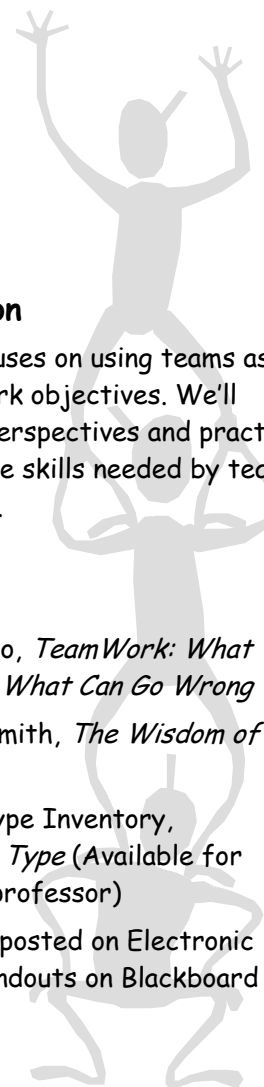
- Distinguish between work groups, potential teams, real teams, and high performing team
- Identify the advantages of teams—and their downside
- Identify the elements of effective teams—what can go wrong and what must go right
- Describe how work is accomplished in various kinds of teams
- Describe the stages of development in teams using several models
- Diagnose conditions and behaviors that impede/facilitate team effectiveness
- Identify and practice skills expected of effective team members and leaders

Course Description

This MPA course focuses on using teams as a way to accomplish work objectives. We'll explore theoretical perspectives and practice the many collaborative skills needed by team members and leaders.

Readings:

- Larson & LaFasto, *TeamWork: What Must Go Right/ What Can Go Wrong*
- Katzenbach & Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams*
- Myers Briggs Type Inventory, *Introduction to Type* (Available for purchase from professor)
- Other readings posted on Electronic Reserve and Handouts on Blackboard



PUBADM 583:

Teams and Teamwork in Public Administration

Are YOU curious about ...

- Teams? Teamwork? Team building?
- The skills of effective team members?
- The wisdom of teams as a way to do work?
- The power of teams as a vehicle for individual and organizational learning?
- Collaboration?
- Shared leadership?
- Participatory decision-making?
- Team dynamics?

Would you like a class that is ...

- Fast paced?
- Packed with experiential education?
- High in cooperation and peer learning?
- Designed to test your performance as a team contributor every session?

If so, this course may be for you!

For a permission number, contact:

Dr. Janet Mills

426-3778

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Department of Public Policy and
Administration

Boise State University



How can we do a three-credit graduate course in 3 weeks?!

Teaching Under the Influence of PA Colleagues

??

Blackboard will help...

You can read the texts and complete the workbook assignments long before class meets. You'll arrive at class theoretically grounded and ready to go! I'll post handouts for various sessions.

Electronic Reserve will help...

I'll post a few good articles on electronic reserve at the library.

The nature of assignments will help...

You can work ahead

After you register for the course, you'll have access to course documents on Blackboard. There you will find Workbook I: Larson and LaFasto and Workbook II: Katzenbach and Smith. Get your hands on the textbooks—from the Bookstore or from an online source—and you can begin the workbook assignments!

Each workbook has a summary—an incomplete summary—for each chapter. Read the (incomplete) summary before you read the chapter in the text. That way, you can read with the intent of finding the missing information. As you read, or after you've read a chapter, complete the chapter summary, adding in the missing information. When you've finished Workbook I, submit it to me in hard copy. Do the same with Workbook II.

I'll accept the workbooks any time prior to the course.

What a great idea for those of you who will be working during this course! Work ahead!

Then just come to class

All you have to do for class is get to class—assuming you have completed the workbooks! No presentations. No group projects. No quizzes. No tests. No stress.

Expect to engage actively during every class session in exercises, simulations, and games that are designed to produce experiential learning about teams and teamwork. The experiential designs highlight contextual features of teams and individual skills necessary for collaboration, conflict management, and shared leadership.

Expect to engage in extensive debriefing of all experiential workouts—this is an important cognitive feature of experiential learning. You will learn a great deal about teams and about your skills as a team member! In addition, expect some mini-lectures, videos, and discussions. These also introduce a significant cognitive frame for the course.

Your active participation is needed every minute of every class session, along with your active support and respect for all class members. Attendance counts—it earns you points toward your grade. Absence does not count—it earns you no points toward your grade.

Do one big assignment — alone

This is a major assignment for the course. I'll give you instructions about this assignment on May 26. The Team Analysis is due May 31—so you will have a four-day weekend to complete it. If this is not possible, you may make special arrangements with me for an alternative deadline.

To do this assignment, you must have completed the two workbooks.

And two journals

During every debriefing period of every class session, take brief notes on what you learn about teams, team skills, and yourself. Each entry in your journal should bear the title of the exercise, game, or simulation you are using as the vehicle for your reflection and learning, and the date it occurred.

I suggest a one-page reflection for each experimental learning activity you write about. Some may be longer. Each journal should explore your reflections on the five experiential learning activities that were the most potent for you.

Journal entries may include both cognitive and emotional learning. You may use anything you have learned from the texts or other readings for the course, in addition to what the class processes during the debriefing sessions, and what you have thought about later.

Appendix 3

Roles for Class Members

<p>General Manager (one week duty for 3 people)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5:15 Distribute “role name tags” to all who are on duty for the session • Call class to order at 5:30 and asks for a quote of the day. • Turn class over to Jan for warm-ups. • Call class to order after short break. • Ask for second quote of the day. • Turn class over to Jan. • Give an 8:55 warning on time. • Collect “role name tags”
<p>Attendance Officer (one week duty for 3 people)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes attendance at 3:10-3:15. • Marks “Tardy” after 3:15. • Distributes nametags to class members. • Collects assignments; returns assignments. • Distributes nametags to latecomers. • Takes attendance at 4:25—end of class. • Collects nametags at end of class. • Returns materials to professor’s office.
<p>Human Resource Manager (one)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records ground rules; emails these to JM to post on Bb. • Makes poster displaying ground rules; displays at all classes. • Receives email requests for additions, deletions, or changes to ground rules and forwards to Jan and Feedback Coordinator.
<p>Feedback Coordinator (one week duty for 3 people)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls for feedback and distributes feedback cards to class members • Collects feedback cards (signed) from class members at • Summarizes feedback to class and professor in an email the following morning
<p>Quote of the day Coordinator (one week duty for 3 people)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares a schedule for sign-ups. • Each class member must present ONE quote of the day. • Keeps daily record of quotes and who presented them.

<p>Quote of the day (each person will provide one quote)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring to class a quote that is relevant to teams and team work. • Read the quote to the class. • Post the quote on flip chart paper, poster, or white board.
<p>Scribe (one week duty for 3 people)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records “quote of the day”. • Records sequence of warm-up activities. • Records sequence of exercises, simulations, and games. • Emails these to class and professor.
<p>Schlepper (one week duty for 3 people)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrives at Jan’s office at 5:10. • Helps carry things to class. • Helps set up class. • Helps take down set ups at end. • Helps carry things to office.
<p>Personnel Manager (1 week duty for 1 person)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a class roster with names, phone numbers, and correct email addresses. • Requests that all class members email him/her a short bio by Wednesday June 18. • Creates a class bio document. • Emails to professor, who posts on Bb.
<p>Wellness Coordinator (one week duty for 3 people)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedules pairs of class members to provide healthy or indulgent snacks for class. • Reminds pairs the day before in person and/or by email. • Schedules pairs of class members to provide bottled water for class. • Reminds pairs the day before in person and/or by email. • Surveys class for coffee preferences. • Fetches coffee pot, creamer, sugar from Jan’s office at 5:10 pm; takes all to class; makes coffee. • Collects \$1.00 from coffee drinkers to cover expense; gives cash to Jan.

Appendix 4**Routine to Expect**

5:15-5:29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive • Check in with Attendance Officer • Get nametag and role nametag if you are on duty • Take care of duties
5:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General manager calls class to order; asks for quote of day • Quote of Day
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-ups activities • Reflection time 3 minutes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-lecture with overheads • Questions and answers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential Learning • Debriefing • Reflection time
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long break • Roles and duties
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-lecture with overheads • Questions and answers • Discussion, as called for
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential Learning • Debriefing • Reflection time
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short break
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-lecture with overheads • Questions and answers • Discussion, as called for
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential Learning • Debriefing • Reflection time

8:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time warning
9:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback Coordinator calls for feedback cards to be written and Submitted
9:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Manager asks for “Best learning” of the session
9:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turn in nametags and role nametags