Active Learning

Cooperative Base Groups

Chapter 4

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(Interaction Book Company, 1998)

This powerpoint presentation was taken directly from the text by Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1998

Jule Scarborough, 2006 **(for PowerPoint presentations, contact julescarborough@niu.edu)**

Class Base Groups

◆ The larger the class and the more complex the subject matter, the more important it is to have class base groups.

◆ The base groups meet at the beginning and ending of each class session or at the beginning of the first class session each week and at the end of the last class session each week.

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Class Base Groups

◈ The members of base groups should information such as phone numbers and schedule information as they may wish to meet outside of class.

Class Base Groups

◆ All members are expected to contribute actively to the group's work:

- Maintain effective working relationships with other members
- Complete all assignments
- Assist group mates in completing their assignments
- Indicate agreement with base group's work by signing weekly contract.

Class Base Groups

♦ At the beginning of each session students meet in base groups to:

1. Greet each other – check to see that no member is under undue stress.

2. Complete the next task for the membership grid. – helps members get to know each other.

3. Pick up their file folders with an attendance sheet, feedback form, and their assignments from the previous class session.

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Class Base Groups

4.   Check to see if members have completed homework or   need help doing so

5.   In addition to homework, members review what each member has read and done since the last class session.

Each member may be prepared to:

-give a summary of what he/she has read, thought about, done

-share resources

-share copies of completed assignments

Class Base Groups

6. Students collect each members' homework, record it in their Base Group Progress Report Sheet, and place the assignments in their file folder.

- The file folder is returned to the instructors desk.

- Periodically the base groups may be given a checklist of academic skills and assesses which ones each member needs to practice.

Class Base Groups

◆ Generally, class base groups are available to support individual group members.

◆ If a group member arrives late, or must leave early on an occasion, the group can provide information about what that student missed.

◆ Group members may assist one another in writing require papers and completing other assignments.

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Class Base Groups

◆ The class session closes with students meeting in base groups. Closing tasks may be:

- Ensure all students understand the assignments
- Summarize at least three things members learned in today's session.
- Summarize how members will use/'apply what they have learned.
- Celebrate the hard work and learning of group members.

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Quick Base Group Meetings

◆ At times there may be only a few minutes for base groups to meet. Even in as short a time as five to ten minutes, base groups are given four tasks.

1. A quick self-disclosure task such as: *"What is the most exciting thing you did during your vacation break?"*

Quick Base Group Meetings

2. An administrative task such as what classes to register for next semester.

3. An academic task such as , *"You have midterms coming up. As a group, write out three pieces of advice for taking tests. I will type up the suggestions from each group and hand them out next week."*

4. A closing task such as wishing each other good luck for the day or week.

Building A Group Identity

◆ The effectiveness of base groups depends in part on the strength of the group identity.

◆ The first week the base groups meet, for example, base groups can:

- Pick a name
- Design a flag
- Choose a motto

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Building A Group Identity

- ◈ If an instructor with the proper expertise is available, the groups will benefit from participating in a "challenge course" involving ropes and obstacles.
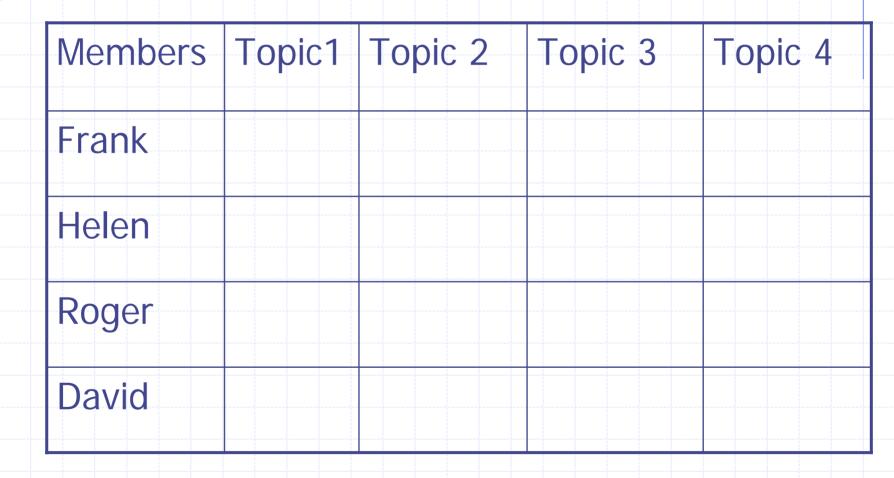
- ◈ This type of physical challenge that the groups complete together builds cohesion quickly.

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Base Group Grid

◆ The more personal the relationship among base group members, the greater the social support members can give each other.

◆ While students will get to know each other on a personal level while they work together, the process can be accelerated through the use of te base group grid.

Base Group Grid

Members	Topic1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4
Frank				
Helen				
Roger				
David				

Checking and Recording Homework

1. Homework is usually checked in base groups at the beginning of the class session

2. One member of each group, the runner, goes to the instructor's desk, picks up the group's folder, and hands out any materials in the folder to the appropriate members.

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Checking and Recording Homework

1. The group reviews the assignment step-by-step to determine how much of the assignment each member completed and how well each member understands how to complete the material covered.

- Two roles are utilized:

  - **Explainer**
  - **Accuracy checker**

Checking and Recording Homework

◆ **Explainer** - explains step-by-step how to complete the material covered.

◆ **Accuracy Checker** - verifies that the explanation is accurate and provides coaching if needed.

Checking and Recording Homework

4. At the end of the review the runner records how much of the assignment each member completed, places members' homework in the group's folder, and returns the folder to the instructor's desk.

Base Group Contract Forms

◆At the end of each class session the base group summarizes:

- What they learned
- How they will apply what they have learned
- How they will help each other implement what was learned

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Base Group Folders

◆ Provides direct communication between students and instructor

◆ Means for managing attendance, assignments, and feedback.

◆ In each folder is an **attendance sheet** that each member initials to indicate attendance at the session

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Base Group Folders

◆ At the end of each session students place their completed **feedback form** in the folder.

◆ The feedback form may ask for

- Three most important things learned
- Favorite part of the session
- Questions students may have

Value of Base Groups

◆ There are many reasons why cooperative base groups should be used.

- Increase student achievement
- Build more positive relationships among students
- Increase students' psychological health

Value of Base Groups

◆ Base groups may also be used to:

- ■ Increase social support
- ■ Reduce attrition
- ■ Promote positive attitudes toward education

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Nature of Social Support

◆ **Social Support –** the existence and availability of people whom one can rely for emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal aid.

◆ **Social Support System**- significant others who share a person's tasks and goals and provide resources that enhance the individual's well-being and help the individual mobilize his/her resources to deal with challenging and stressful situations.(Johnson&Johnson, 1989) Jule Scarborough, 2006

Nature of Social Support

◆ There are two types of social support:

1. Academic – classmates and faculty provide the assistance and help students need to succeed academically

2. Personal - classmates and faculty care about and are personally committed to the well-being of each student.

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Base Groups and Social Support

◆ *The more social support a student has, the higher the student's achievement will tend to be, the more the student will persist on challenging tasks, the more likely students will be graduated , the healthier psychologically and physically the students will tend to be, the better able the students will be to manage stress, and the more likely students will be to challenge their competencies to grow and develop. (Johnson $ Johnson,1989)*

THE POWER OF COOPERATIVE BASE GROUPS

RESOURCES	FUNCTIONS: TO INCREASE
1. **Emotional concern** such as attachment, reassurance, and a sense of being able to rely on and confide in a person, all of which contribute to the belief that one is loved and valued.	1. **Achievement and productivity,** including persistence on difficult and challenging tasks.
2. **Instrumental aid** such as direct aid, goods, or services.	2. **Physical health** as individuals involved in close relationships live longer, get sick less often, and recover from illness faster than do isolated individuals.
3. **Information aid** such as facts or advice that may help to solve a problem.	3. **Psychological health**, as close relationships promote adjustment and development by preventing neuroticism and psychopathology, reducing distress, and providing resources such as confidants.
4. **Appraisal aid** such as feedback about degree to which certain behavioral standards are met (information relevant to self-evaluation).	4. **Constructive management of stress and challenges** by providing the caring, resources, information, and feedback needed to cope with stress and by buffering the impact of stress on the individual. Social support and stress are related in that the greater the social support individuals have, the less the stress they experience, and the better able they are to manage the stresses involved in life. The same is true of challenges that test the limits of a student's ability and resolve. There are few challenges that cannot be met when sufficient social support is provided.

Long-Term Cooperative Efforts

◆ The longer a cooperative group exists, the more caring their relationships will tend to be, the greater the social support they will provide for each other, the more committed they will be to teach other's success, and the more influence members will have over each other.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

ACADEMIC SUPPORT	PERSONAL SUPPORT
Encourage And Hold Members Accountable To Complete Assignments, Attend Class, And Achieve Academically	Personalize Class And ⸱ ⸱ ⸱ Life
Discusses Assignments, Answers Questions, Give Help & Assistance In Understanding Material Being Studied	Listen Sympathetically When A Member Has Problems With Friends Or Parents
Provides Information About What a Late Or Absent Member Missed	Help Each Other Solve Nonacademic Problems
Prepares Members To Take Tests And Go Over Questions Missed Afterwards	Communicate Respect, Liking, And Confidence In One's Ability To Manage One's Challenges
Share Areas Of Expertise (Such As Art Or Computers) With Each Other	Communicate Commitment To One's Well-Being
Monitor Members' Academic Progress And Ensure They Are Achieving	Discuss Personal Beliefs And Experiences

Attrition

◆ Two of the causes of dropping out of school are social alienation and academic alienation.

◆ Any student who believes that *"in this school, no one knows me, no one cares about me, no one would miss me when I'm gone,"* is at the risk of dropping out.

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Attrition

◆ **Base groups also provide a means of fighting a student's inclination to drop out**.

Changing Students' Attitudes About Academic Work

◆ There are several general principles, supported by research (see Johnson & F. Johnson, 1997) to guide faculty efforts.

1. Attitudes are changed in groups, not individual by individual.

2. Attitudes are changed as a result of small group discussions that lead to public commitment to work harder in school and take education more seriously.

Changing Students' Attitudes About Academic Work

3. Messages from individuals who care about, and are committed to, the students are taken more seriously than messages from indifferent others.

4. Personally tailor appeals to value education to the student. General messages are not nearly as effective as personal messages.

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Changing Students' Attitudes About Academic Work

5. Plan for the long term, not sudden conversions. Internationalization of academic values will take years of persuasion by caring and committed peers

6. Support from caring and committed peers is essential to modifying attitudes and behaviors and maintaining the new attitudes and behaviors.

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Meaning, Purpose, and Psychological Health

◆ **Meaning** – is primarily created from contributing to the well being of others and the common good.

◆ The significance of one's actions depend on the degree to which one balances concern for self with concern for others and the community as a whole.

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Meaning, Purpose, and Psychological Health

◆ Young adults have turned away from careers of public service to careers of self-service.

◆ Many young adults have a **delusion of individualism** believing that:

- A. they are separate and apart from other individuals and therefore,

- B. others' frustration, unhappiness, hunger, despair and misery have no significant bearing on their own well-being

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Conclusions

◆ **Base Groups** – are long-term heterogeneous cooperative leaning groups with stable membership whose primary responsibilities are to provide support, encouragement, and assistance in completing assignments and hold each other accountable for striving to learn.