DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY IN GROUPS AND TEAMS

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Effective Functioning of Diverse Groups

- Much literature on negative factors in diverse groups
- Communication problems
- Discomfort
- No evidence of overall benefit of diverse groups or teams on performance
- For all types of diversity
- Mixed evidence on creativity
Effective Functioning of Diverse Groups

- Social pressure from the majority
- Low impact of minority perspectives
- In-group bias
- Problems with expertise diversity
Seven Basic Problems of Diverse Group Interaction/Teamwork

• Group size
• Production blocking
• Unequal participation
• Status/expertise differential
• Similarity/agreement bias—avoid conflict
• Satisficing/going with first good ideas solutions
  • Fixation
• Lack of structure/preparation/clear goals
Interaction in “Natural Diverse Groups”

- One person talks at a time
- Uneven participation
- Initial ideas become the focus of attention-premature consensus
- Tend to share similar ideas
- Focus on agreement or common expertise
- Deferment to experts
- Inhibition of minority perspectives/minority members
Seven Bad Habits of Meetings

• Done as one group
• Done only as a group
• Lack of focus/subtopics
• Ineffective turn taking
• Lack of attention
• Failure to tap cognitive stimulation during and after interaction
Tapping the Collective Genius of Diverse Groups

- Small group/pair interaction
- Balance of group, pair, alone experiences
- Focusing on one issue or component at a time
- Mix verbal exchanges with electronic or written exchanges
- Benefits of group experience, training, planning, structure
- Learning about each others’ unique skills and talents
- Effective handling of conflicting perspectives
Common Knowledge Effect
Common Knowledge Effect
Common Knowledge Effect
Tapping the Diverse and Creative Potential of Groups

• Initial private search of relevant knowledge or ideas (by writing ideas or typing)
  • Avoids initial bias or fixation
  • Allows for in-depth search of relevant knowledge of all group members
  • Idea search can occur without distraction/flow of ideas
  • No competition for face-time
Tapping the Diverse and Creative Potential of Groups

• Sharing this knowledge in an efficient manner (writing, electronic) with a small sub-group
  • Attentive processing of ideas by others
  • Allow for stimulation effect of new ideas
  • Novel ideas have more impact (contrast with own ideas)
  • All members have input
Tapping the Diverse and Creative Potential of Groups

• Then some more private reflection time to build on the shared ideas
  • Ideas stimulated by the sharing processes
  • Ideas from diverse group members can stimulate further thinking
  • Connect own ideas/knowledge to the shared material
  • No distraction from others’ responses
  • No competition for face time
Tapping the Diverse and Creative Potential of Groups

• Select best ideas in small groups
  • Idea selection tends to be better in groups than in isolation
  • Benefits of multiple perspectives and experiences in evaluation applicability
  • Crowdsourcing/electronic voting
  • Wisdom of the crowd
  • Groupthink not a problem
Tapping the Diverse and Creative Potential of Groups

• Share the ideas with the entire group/come to consensus about best ideas
  • The contrasting ideas coming from different groups will stimulate further discussion/elaboration
  • Discovery of overlap in top ideas may increase confidence in those ideas
Tapping the Diverse and Creative Potential of Groups

• Allow for reflective input after the group meetings about the ideas
  • New ideas may occur to participants after the meetings
Tapping the Diverse and Creative Potential of Groups

• Have small subgroup of relevant experts develop ideas into implementable format
  • They should interact with originators of ideas to insure they understand the full context of the ideas
  • They should get input from those outside the division or organization who have relevant expertise
Tapping the Diverse and Creative Potential of Groups

• Training
• Experience/training as a team
• Development of team skills
• Increased knowledge about team members
• Collective intelligence
• Planning for the interaction process
• Leadership and organizational support
Implications for everyday teamwork

• Need for intense and efficient one-on-one interactions
• Have structured innovation sessions in limited time periods
• Alternate group interaction and reflective periods close in time
• Use different modes of interaction at different phases
• Bring ideas to the team for evaluation, elaboration, development
• Become an innovative, effective and adaptive team
Conclusions: Tapping Diverse Potential in Teams

- Use effective interaction processes

- Gain experience as a team with effective processes

- Supportive leadership

- Positive attitude—groups, teams, diversity
ADWS (Productive) and Diversity

ADWS (Productive) and Diversity (Median Split) on Quality

Quality of Ideas

HighADWS
LowADWS

ADWS (Productive) Score

DivHigh
DivLow
Group Dummy Model

\[ \text{\textbullet} + \text{\textbullet} = \text{\textbullet} < \text{\textbullet} \]
Group Wisdom Model

\[ \text{+} \quad \text{=} \quad \geq \]
Group Genius or Synergy Model

+  =  >