

Functioning in Groups

As you listen in on and observe groups, note where and when any group member is engaged in any of the following actions. Record the group member's initials in the appropriate box. You might also want to record the time at which the action took place. Note: The bottom row are unproductive behaviors that sometimes occur in groups.

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| <p>Initiating—taking the initiative by convening the group, suggesting procedures, changing direction, providing new energy and ideas.</p> | <p>Seeking information or opinions—requesting facts, preferences, suggestions and ideas.</p> | <p>Giving information or opinions—providing facts, data, information from research or experience.</p> | <p>Questioning—stepping back from what is happening and challenging the group or asking other specific questions about the task.</p> |
| <p>Clarifying—interpreting ideas or suggestions, clearing up confusions, defining terms or asking others to clarify.</p> | <p>Connecting—drawing connections between contributions from different people and linking up ideas that seem unconnected.</p> | <p>Recording—helping to track the groups ideas and conversation in some concrete way.</p> | <p>Summarizing—putting contributions into a pattern, while adding no new information.</p> |
| <p>Supporting—being encouraging & responsive to others. May be through gestures, smiles, or making eye-contact. Even silence can be supportive for native speakers.</p> | <p>Revising—revising or modifying one's initial statements based on new information or increased understanding.</p> | <p>Observing Process—noticing & commenting on the dynamics of the group.</p> | <p>Mediating—recognizing disagreements & figuring out what is behind them. Devising ways to accommodate different values, views, & approaches.</p> |
| <p>Reconciling—reconciling disagreements. Emphasizing shared views among members can reduce tension.</p> | <p>Compromising—yielding a position or modifying opinions. This can help move the group forward.</p> | <p>Making a personal comment—occasional personal comments as they relate to the work may strengthen a group by making people feel human.</p> | <p>Humor—funny remarks or good-natured comments used to relieve tension, deal with participants who dominate, or provide a welcome break from concentration.</p> |
| <p>Dominating or reluctant participants—talking too often, asserting superiority, telling lengthy stories, or not letting others finish.</p> | <p>Digressions and tangents—Too many interesting side stories can be obstacles to group progress.</p> | <p>Rush to work—a lack of pertinence, pressuring the group to move on before others are ready.</p> | <p>Feuds—conflicts carried over into the group that impedes its work.</p> |

Adapted by Ron Ritchhart 2021 from "Group Work" by the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning