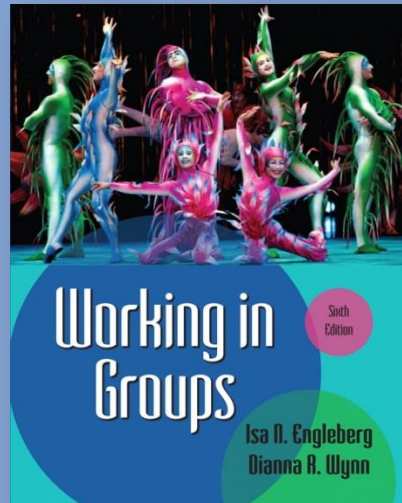# Working in Groups *6ᵗʰ edition*

Isa N. Engleberg

Prince George's Community College

Dianna R. Wynn

Nash Community College

Verbal and Nonverbal Communication in Groups

Chapter Six

Two Essential Tools

Verbal Communication	Nonverbal Communication
• How you use words and language	• Message components other than words that generate meaning

Language and Meaning

Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning
• The objective, dictionary-based meaning of a word	• The personal feelings connected to the meaning of a word

Team Talk in Groups

The language group members use as they work together to achieve group goal.

Language that reveals where the group is coming from and where it is going.

Language that builds group relationships.

Anne Donnellon, *Team Talk*

Use, I, You, and We Language

I

Take responsibility for feelings and actions, but don't overuse and appear self-centered.

You

Don't shift responsibility from yourself to others.

We

Use inclusive plural pronouns; share credit for group achievements.

List Team Talk Techniques

Team Talk Techniques include:

- Use the pronouns *we*, *us*, and *our* when referring to the group and its work.

- Express shared rather than individual needs.

- Ask group members to use your first name.

- _____

- _____

- _____

Levels of Meaning

Abstract Words

- Refer to ideas or concepts that cannot be observed or touched such as *fairness*, *freedom*, *work*

- Examples

  - organism

  - animal

  - pet

Concrete Words

- Refer to specific things that *can* be perceived by the senses. Concrete words minimize misunderstanding.

- Examples

  - dog

  - beagle

  - Fido

Offensive Labels

- I'm relaxed; you're untidy; **she's a slob**.

- I'm energetic; you're excitable; **he's out of control**.

- I'm full-figured; she's overweight; **Karen is** _____.

- Our group works hard; Lucinda's group members are workaholics; **Greg's group members are** _____.

Language and Gender

- Females tend to use language to maintain relationships and cooperate with others.

  Qualifiers – "maybe," "perhaps," "really,

  Tag questions – "The answer is 4. Right?" "Let's not meet tonight. Is that okay?"

- Males tend to use direct and forceful language to assert their ideas and compete with others.

Verbal Abuse

Forms of Verbal Abuse

- Tone of Voice
- Content

- Language
- Nonverbal Cues
- Volume

Examples

- Harsh, sarcastic, angry
- Cruel comments, racial slurs
- Foul or obscene words
- _____
- _____

How to Curb Verbal Abuse

- Ask for repetition: "Please repeat that."

- Physically step back from the person.

- _____

- _____

- _____

Codeswitching

The ability to change from the dialect of your own culture and adopt the language of the majority in a particular situation

People may learn *codeswitching* to avoid negative stereotypes about them based on their dialect.

Nonverbal Communication

The behavioral elements of messages other than the actual words spoken

More than 50% of all meaning is communicated nonverbally.

Nonverbal Behavior

Personal Appearance

Facial Expression and Eye Contact

Vocal Expression

Physical Expression

Environment

Nonverbal Communication and Gender

Women tend to	Men tend to
• Use more facial expression • Smile more • Use more eye contact • Use more expressive movements • Touch others more • Notice nonverbal behavior more	• Use more expansive movements • Appear more relaxed • Appear less involved • Touch others less • Shake hands more • Use a larger personal distance

Nonverbal Immediacy

- Leaning forward

- Physical closeness to others

- Eye contact

- Openness of arms and body

- Touching

- Direct body orientation

- Relaxed posture

- Positive facial and vocal expressions

- Laughing and smiling

Personal Appearance

Physical appearance…

- influences first impressions.

- helps determine how others draw conclusions about education, success, moral character, etc.

Facial Expression and Eye Contact

Facial Expression

- We can produce more than 1,000 different facial expressions.
- Facial expressions allow non-speakers to contribute to ongoing group discussions.

The Significance of Eye Contact

- Lack of eye contact may be perceived as rudeness, indifference, nervousness, or dishonesty.
- Eye contact norms are culturally determined.
- Eye contact influences interaction in small groups.
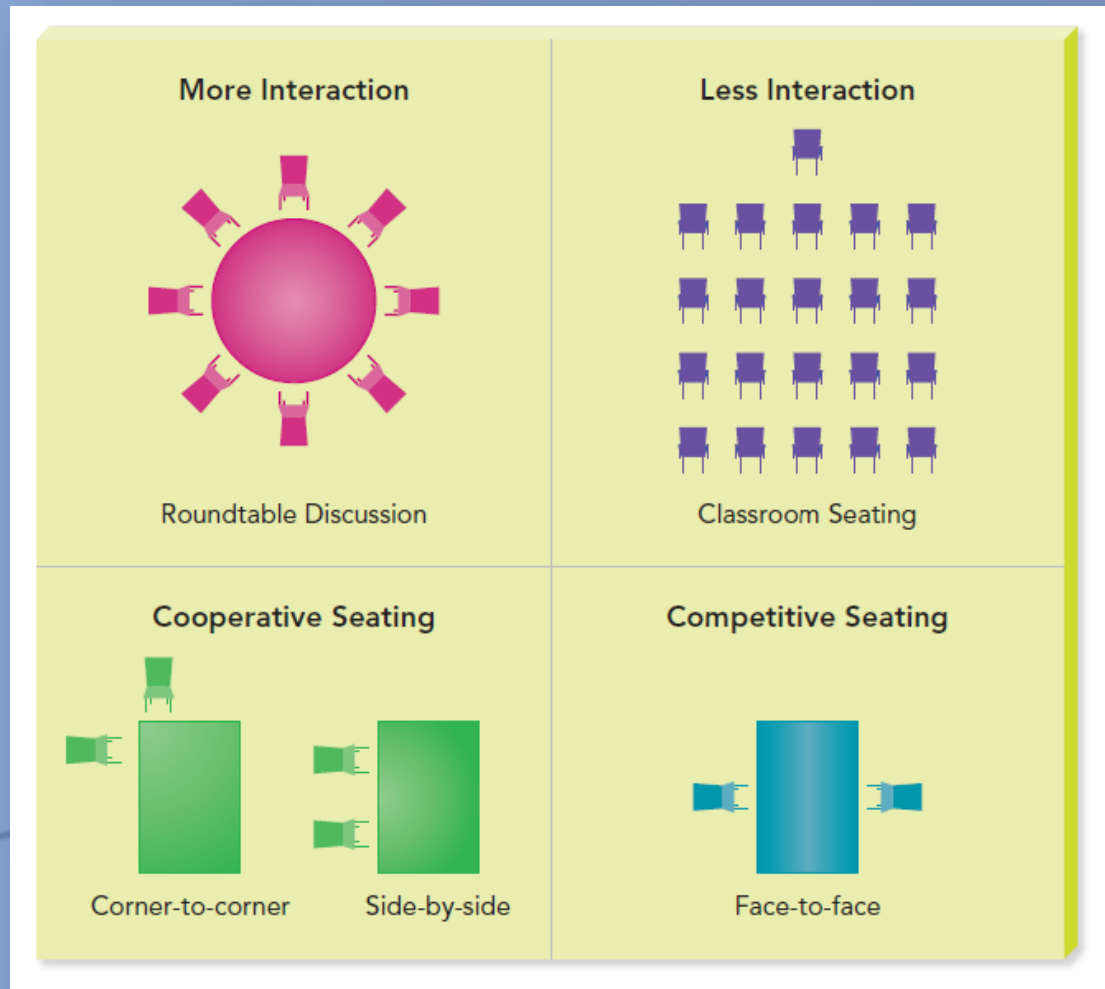
Physical Expression

Kinesics

The study of body movement and physical expression

Touch

can express encouragement, support, or happiness.

Interaction between touch approachers and touch avoiders can create misunderstandings.

Arrangement of Space

PowerPoint Quiz

Task-oriented leaders are likely to sit at the head of a table; socially-oriented leaders are likely to sit . . .

- in the middle position at the side of a table.

- at various places around the table in order to sit side-by-side with every member.

- at the head of a table.

- next to a task-oriented member who can keep the leader on track.
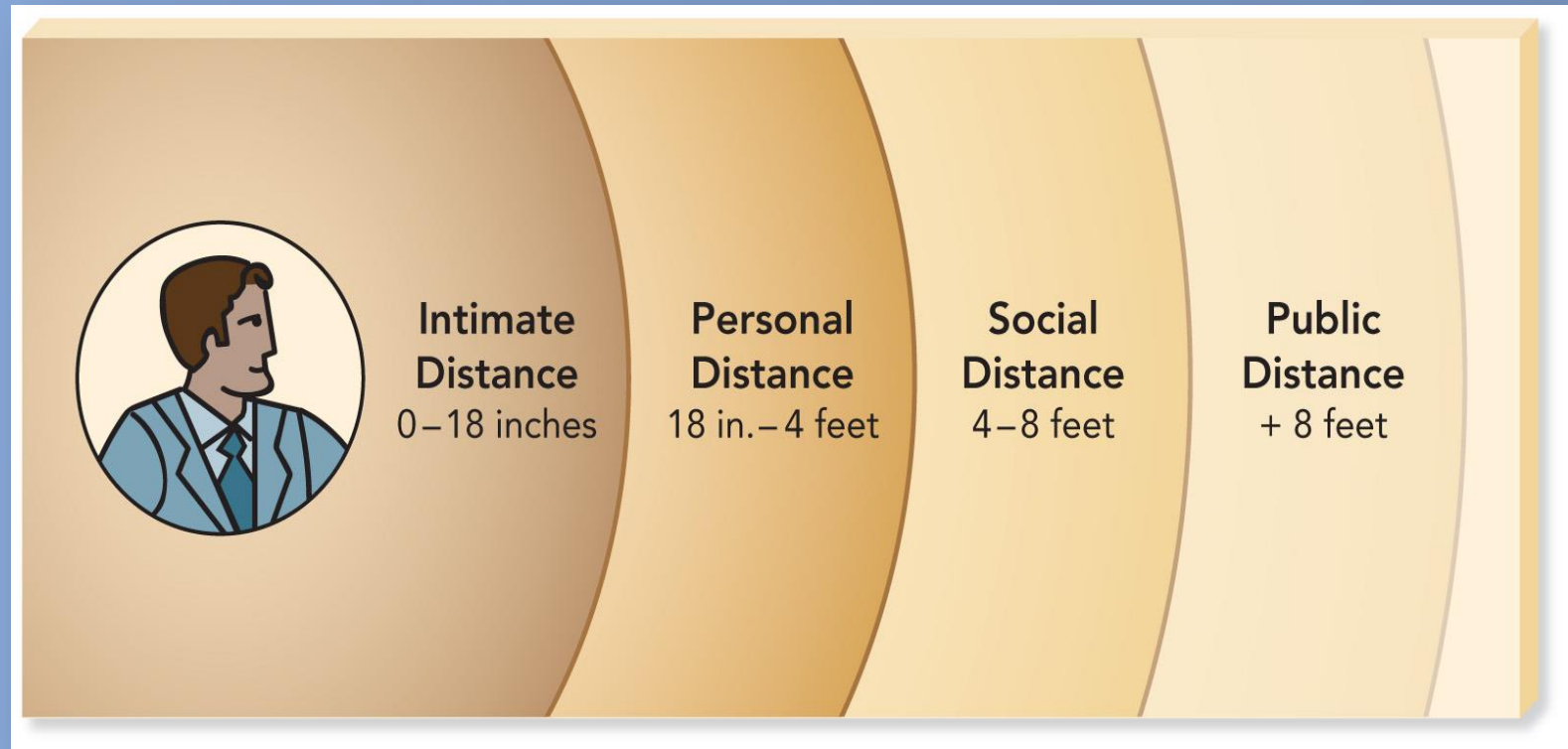
Territoriality

Examples:

- Your usual seat in a classroom or meeting room
- Marking your territory with objects (purse, book, coat, food)

Members who fail to respect the territory of others violate an important group norm.

The sense of personal ownership that is attached to a particular space

Zones of Personal Space

In North America

Intimate Distance 0–18 inches

Personal Distance 18 in.–4 feet

Social Distance 4–8 feet

Public Distance + 8 feet

Create a Supportive Communication Climate

- A group's **climate** is the degree to which members feel comfortable interacting.

- Jack Gibb describes six dialectic behaviors that influence whether a group's climate is supportive or defensive.

Group Climate Dialectics

Supportive Climate

- Description
- Problem Orientation
- Spontaneity
- Empathy
- Equality
- Provisionalism

Defensive Climate

- Evaluation
- Control
- Strategy
- Neutrality
- Superiority
- Certainty

PowerPoint Quiz

What type of supportive or defensive response is illustrated in the statement: "That's a stupid way to approach the problem"?

- Descriptive
- Evaluative
- Problem-oriented
- Strategic
- Empathic

Match the Team Talk Examples

A. **Identification**. Plural pronouns.

B. **Interdependence.** Cooperative, interactive words.

C. **Power differential**. Equal terms.

___ "Let's develop a reasonable schedule."

___ "We've done a great job so far, let's keep working."

___ "Dick, what happened to Jane?"

Match the Team Talk Examples

D. **Social Distance**. Casual language, nicknames, slang.

E. **Conflict Management**. Non-threatening tone, nonjudgmental language.

F. **Negotiation Process**. "What if" questions; summarize areas of agreement.

___ "What if we postpone the meeting?"

___ "Hey troops, this problem ain't a hill to die on."

___ "Let's step back and see if there's some area of agreement."

PowerPoint Quiz

Research on dialects, reveals that . . .

A.   People judge others by their dialect.

B.   People seeking career success often change their dialect to Standard American Speech.

C.   Standard American Speech is most accepted by the majority of the American culture.

D.   We should be aware of dialect prejudices and look beyond the surface when judging others.

E.   All of the above.

Assess Your Group's Team Talk

- Do members talk to one another on equal terms?

  Very often   Sometimes   Rarely

- Do members express empathy and liking?

  Very often   Sometimes   Rarely

- Do members use nonjudgmental language?

  Very often   Sometimes   Rarely

- Do members paraphrase one another?

  Very often   Sometimes   Rarely

Language Difficulties & Examples

Bypassing

- _____

Offensive Language

- _____

Jargon

- _____

PowerPoint Quiz

At what distance do members of most

well-established groups interact?

- Intimate distance

- Personal distance

- Social distance

- Business distance

- Public distance