CHAPTER 8

Group Processes

OUTLINE

I. Individuals in Groups: The Presence of Others
   A. Social Facilitation: When Others Arouse Us
   B. Social Loafing: When Others Relax Us
   C. Facilitation and Loafing: Unifying the Paradigms
   D. Deindividuation: When People Lose Control

II. Group Dynamics: Interacting with Others
   A. Joining a Group
   B. Roles, Norms, and Cohesiveness
   C. Group Polarization
   D. Groupthink
   E. Group Performance: Are More Heads Better than One?

III. Cooperation, Competition, and Conflict
   A. Mixed Motives and Social Dilemmas
   B. Conflict Escalation
   C. Reducing Conflict through GRIT
   D. Negotiation

IV. Review

V. Key Terms

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: GUIDELINES FOR STUDY

You should be able to do each of the following by the conclusion of Chapter 8.

1. Explain how the presence of others affects task performance and how Zajonc’s social facilitation model accounts for these effects. Describe three alternative accounts for these effects. (pp. 259-262)

2. Describe how working with others on a task affects productivity. Explain the concept of social loafing, identify factors that can reduce the likelihood of loafing, and distinguish between situations likely to lead to social facilitation versus social loafing. (pp. 262-265)

3. Define deindividuation. Describe how environmental cues and a sense of identity can affect this process. (pp. 266-268)

4. Describe the reasons that people join a group, and discuss the process of adjustment to a new group. Explain the processes of group development. (pp. 269-270)

5. Describe roles, norms, and cohesiveness, and explain their influence on group behavior and performance. (pp. 270-273)

6. Describe group polarization and distinguish between the informational and normative processes through which it occurs. (pp. 273-275)
7. Define groupthink and its antecedents, behavioral symptoms, and consequences. Address how groupthink can be prevented. (pp. 275-278)

8. Describe the different types of tasks that groups perform, and the relationship between group performance and type of task. Discuss goal setting in groups, and the advantages and disadvantages of brainstorming. (pp. 278-281)

9. Describe the roles of biased sampling, communication networks, information-processing biases, and diversity in group communication and performance. (pp. 281-285)

10. Define social dilemma. Describe the prisoner’s dilemma and resource dilemmas. Discuss mixed motives in the context of these dilemmas, and delineate psychological and structural factors that influence behavior in social dilemmas. (pp. 286-289)

11. Discuss how threat capacity and perceptions of others can lead to the escalation of group conflict. Explain how GRIT, negotiation, and finding a common ground can reduce group conflict. (pp. 289-295)

**MAJOR CONCEPTS: THE BIG PICTURE**

Below are three basic issues or principles that organize Chapter 8. You should know these issues and principles well.

1. The presence of others can have a major impact on people’s behavior. It improves our performance on simple tasks, but impairs our performance on difficult tasks. If people work with others on a joint project, they tend to slack off and do less work than if they worked individually. And, when people form together in an unorganized crowd, they often lose their sense of identity and can be spurred to violent and destructive acts.

2. People tend to interact most with others in their group. This group interaction is facilitated by the existence of roles for various members, shared norms for group activity, and group cohesiveness. Interacting with others with shared convictions can strengthen these convictions and lead people to lose perspective on problems and engage in an excessive tendency to seek concurrence, called groupthink. Research on the performance of groups shows that they often do not perform as well as most people think; however, diversity in an integrated group can enhance the group’s performance.

3. People bring different motives to their group interactions. These motives can lead to cooperation, competition, or conflict. Research on social dilemmas suggests that people often respond in kind to others, and that they can be cooperative but will also take unfair rewards if they can get away with it. Conflict between groups can escalate, even if one or both groups have the capacity to harm the other and have little to gain from the conflict. This escalation is often fueled by distorted views of the other group. Fortunately, conflict can also be reduced. Strategies such as negotiating, finding common ground, and using graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension-reduction (GRIT) are effective in resolving conflict.
KEY TERM EXERCISE: THE CONCEPTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Below are all of the key terms that appear in **boldface** in Chapter 8. To help you better understand these concepts, rather than just memorize them, write a definition for each term in your own words. After doing so, look at the next section where you’ll find a list of definitions from the textbook for each of the key terms presented in random order. For each of your definitions, find the corresponding textbook definition. Note how your definitions compare with those from the textbook.

**Key Terms**

1. social dilemma
2. evaluation apprehension theory
3. mere presence theory
4. social loafing
5. graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension-reduction (GRIT)
6. deindividuation
7. collective
8. resource dilemma
9. group polarization
10. groupthink
11. social facilitation
12. brainstorming
13. distraction-conflict theory
14. escalation of commitment
15. integrative agreement
16. collective effort model
17. prisoner's dilemma
18. process loss
19. transactive memory

**Textbook Definitions**

- a. A group-produced reduction in individual output on easy tasks where contributions are pooled.
- b. The condition in which commitments to a failing course of action are increased to justify investments already made.
- c. Which concern how two or more people share a limited resource.
- d. A technique that attempts to increase the production of creative ideas by encouraging group members to speak freely without criticizing their own or others’ contributions.
e. A situation in which a self-interested choice by everyone creates the worst outcome for everyone.

f. A process whereby the presence of others enhances performance on easy tasks but impairs performance on difficult tasks.

g. People engaged in common activities but with minimal direct interaction.

h. The theory that individuals will exert effort on a collective task to the degree that they think their individual efforts will be important, relevant, and meaningful for achieving outcomes that they value.

i. A theory holding that the presence of others will produce social facilitation effects only when those others are seen as potential evaluators.

j. A group decision-making style characterized by an excessive tendency among group members to seek concurrence.

k. A negotiated resolution to a conflict in which all parties obtain outcomes that are superior to what they would have obtained from an equal division of the contested resources.

l. A theory holding that the mere presence of others is sufficient to produce social facilitation effects.

m. The loss of a person’s sense of individuality and the reduction of normal constraints against deviant behavior.

n. A strategy for unilateral, persistent efforts to establish trust and cooperation between opposing parties.

o. The exaggeration through group discussion of initial tendencies in the thinking of group members.

p. A theory holding that the presence of others will produce social facilitation effects only when those others distract from the task and create attentional conflict.

q. In the prisoner’s dilemma, participants are given a series of choices in which they have the option of cooperating or competing.

r. A group may perform worse than it would if every individual performed up to his or her potential.

s. A shared system for remembering information that enables multiple people to remember information together more efficiently than they could alone.
ANSWERS FOR KEY TERM EXERCISE

Answers for the key terms exercise are listed below.

1. e
2. i
3. l
4. a
5. n
6. m
7. g
8. c
9. o
10. j
11. f
12. d
13. p
14. b
15. k
16. h
17. q
18. r
19. s
PRACTICE QUIZ: TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHAPTER

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Dave is a novice tennis player. He is more anxious when being watched by a group of instructors than by a group of novice players. This difference in anxiety illustrates the process of
   a. social comparison.
   b. evaluation apprehension.
   c. social loafing.
   d. mere presence.

2. Groups vary in specific characteristics, but all groups can be defined by three essential components:
   a. attitudes, values, and norms.
   b. roles, values, and ideologies.
   c. roles, norms, and cohesiveness.
   d. values, goals, and cohesiveness.

3. Ben manages an automobile assembly plant. Since he started requiring workers to inscribe their names on the cars they assemble, quality control has found fewer defective cars. Ben reduced social loafing by making
   a. integrative agreements.
   b. superordinate goals.
   c. contributions identifiable.
   d. cohesive work teams.

4. When people work with others on a task, they
   a. work harder than when they work alone.
   b. work just as hard as when they work alone.
   c. don’t work as hard as when they work alone.
   d. work on different tasks than when they work alone.

5. The marketing staff reports to the marketing director, who in turn reports to the president. This system is an example of
   a. a communication network.
   b. production blocking.
   c. performance matching.
   d. an integrative agreement.

6. One consequence of deindividuation is that people experience a decrease in
   a. social comparison.
   b. anonymity.
   c. self-awareness.
   d. goal striving.

7. Kathy hopes to join a sorority at her college. One reason she wants to join this group is that she
   a. is following an implicit norm.
   b. is looking to develop superordinate goals.
   c. likes the other members and desires an opportunity to interact with them.
   d. is vulnerable to groupthink.
8. The kind of reciprocity that usually reduces cooperation and escalates conflict between parties involves the use of
   a. perceived competence.
   b. threat capacity.
   c. public goods.
   d. persuasive arguments.

9. The mere presence account of social facilitation suggests that people do better on easy tasks and worse on hard tasks when performing in front of others than when performing alone because
   a. they are concerned about the impression they are making.
   b. they are distracted by the other people.
   c. the presence of other people produces arousal, which in turn affects performance.
   d. they don’t work as hard in the presence of others.

10. When people discuss a topic with others in their own social group who agree with them, they are likely to
    a. shift their position away from the initial leanings of the group.
    b. reverse their position altogether.
    c. exhibit no change in their position.
    d. enhance or exaggerate the initial leanings of the group.

11. Linda thinks that capital punishment is wrong and should not be allowed. When she talks to her friends who agree with her views, she most likely will
    a. develop arguments in favor of capital punishment.
    b. believe more strongly that capital punishment is wrong.
    c. be unaffected by her friends’ views.
    d. challenge her friends’ views.

12. Highly cohesive groups, group structure, and stressful situations are the three major contributing factors in the development of
    a. group roles.
    b. free riders.
    c. groupthink.
    d. superordinate goals.

13. Jane’s company is developing a new product. There are indications that the product may be defective and could result in substantial liability for the company. Jane argues that the company’s strong record of developing and marketing products suggests that they will pull through this time as well. The board members quickly decide to go ahead with the product despite its dangers. Their reasoning is an example of
    a. group roles.
    b. mutual cooperation.
    c. social loafing.
    d. groupthink.

14. The people in Everytown are celebrating the victory of their town’s soccer team in a championship tournament. A large crowd of people join together in the town center to celebrate the victory and begin to feel anonymous. Because people are in this crowd they are more likely to
    a. engage in destructive behaviors.
    b. be reserved because they are concerned about how others will think of them.
    c. celebrate the victory through group cooperation.
    d. be concerned with the evaluations of others.
15. Priscilla and Carol are preparing for a big exam. Priscilla checks out a library book that Carol wants so that Carol can’t get it. Carol steals Priscilla’s notes so that Priscilla can’t use them. Priscilla and Carol are
a. engaged in a conflict spiral.
b. both exhibiting an individualist orientation.
c. engaged in a public goods dilemma.
d. restrained by threat capacity.

16. When two people are faced with a situation in which mutual cooperation by both is beneficial to both, competition by both is harmful to both, but competition by only one is beneficial to the competitor and harmful to the cooperator, the situation can be described as
a. the prisoner’s dilemma.
b. the tragedy of the commons.
c. a public goods dilemma.
d. a free-rider problem.

17. The red gang and the blue gang have been fighting for some time. On Friday, when the blue gang decides to share its hangout with the red gang, the red gang is likely to attribute this behavior to
a. the kindness of the blue gang.
b. an attempt to reduce conflict between the two gangs.
c. ulterior motivation on the part of the blue gang.
d. a change of leadership in the blue gang.

18. Specific behaviors, either formal or informal, that are expected for different positions within a group are called
a. norms.
b. social roles.
c. disjunctive tasks.
d. superordinate goals.

19. Stating one’s intentions to reduce tension and taking unilateral cooperative actions to reduce tension are steps in
a. GRIT.
b. groupthink.
c. integrative agreements.
d. social dilemmas.

20. Stephanie and Keith both want to use their jointly owned wagon at the same time. Their mother tells them that dessert depends on their taking turns with the wagon. Her use of dessert to foster turn-taking illustrates the application of
a. integrative agreements.
b. superordinate goals.
c. group polarization.
d. social dilemmas.

21. People from different cultures may have very different assumptions and styles concerning negotiations. Which of the following is from the western perspective?
a. The first step in negotiating is to develop a trusting relationship between the individual negotiators.
b. Arguments may be more holistic, and emotionality and contradiction tolerated.
c. Some of the most important communications are nonverbal or indirect.
d. Written contracts are binding; oral commitments are not.
22. Because of the effects of social facilitation, which of the following must be highly trained to make split-second decisions under highly arousing situations?
   a. Firefighters
   b. Police officers
   c. Military personnel
   d. All of the above are correct

Essay Questions
23. Describe three ways in which the presence of others can have an impact on people’s behavior.
24. Explain how interacting with others who have shared convictions can lead to the strengthening of those convictions.
25. Discuss two techniques that can lead to the reduction of conflict between groups.
26. Discuss the collectivistic perspective versus the individualistic perspective in avoiding direct conflict.
ANSWERS TO THE PRACTICE QUIZ

Multiple-Choice Questions: Correct Answers and Explanations

1. **b. evaluation apprehension.** Because Dave is more nervous in front of experts, he is probably concerned about others evaluating him. After all, the experts can be harsher and more detailed critics than the novices. There is no evidence to show that he is comparing himself with others or engaging in social comparison. Social loafing is unlikely to occur in this situation because Dave is not working on a joint task where individual productivity is unobservable. Finally, the mere presence explanation of the social facilitation phenomenon does not distinguish between types of people, so Dave’s differential reaction to experts and novices is inconsistent with mere presence.

2. **c. roles, norms, and cohesiveness.** The main text argues that all groups can be characterized by the three components: roles, norms, and cohesiveness. Values, ideologies, and goals are all likely to be important to groups but they are not one of the three essential components.

3. **c. contributions identifiable.** Social loafing is the tendency for people to work less productively when they work with others on a joint product. Research shows that social loafing is reduced when people’s contributions are identifiable. When Ben required workers to put their names on the cars they assemble, he made their contributions identifiable and thereby reduced social loafing. There is no evidence that Ben used integrative agreements, superordinate goals, or cohesive work teams.

4. **c. don’t work as hard as when they work alone.** When people work with others on a joint task, they tend to work less productively than when they work alone. This phenomenon is called social loafing. There is no evidence that people shift the tasks they are working on when they work with others.

5. **a. communication network.** A communication network is the chain of transmission of messages within an organization. This example clearly shows who communicates with whom, but it contains no evidence of production blocking, performance matching, or an integrative agreement.

6. **c. self-awareness.** When people experience deindividuation, they become less self-aware. This decrease in self-awareness is probably responsible for many of the effects of deindividuation: increased aggression, increased helpfulness, etc. There is no evidence that deindividuation leads to a decrease in social comparison or goal striving, and it increases anonymity.

7. **c. likes the other members and desires an opportunity to interact with them.** The main text suggests several reasons for which people may want to join a group. Two closely linked reasons mentioned here are: because they want to engage in the activities of the group and because they like the members of the group and want to spend time with them. Kathy may want to join the sorority for both of these reasons. There is no documented evidence, however, that people join groups to follow implicit norms, to develop superordinate goals, or because they are vulnerable to groupthink.

8. **b. threat capacity.** When two groups emphasize threat capacity (i.e., how much they could hurt each other), they are likely to escalate conflict between themselves. This form of reciprocity often leads to a cycle of deepening tension between the groups. An arms race is a clear example of the way threat capacity can lead to increased tension and conflict. Perceived competence and persuasive arguments have little to do with reciprocity or reducing cooperation. And public goods,
what people fail to share in the public goods dilemma, have some connection to reciprocity but have little to do with the escalation of conflict between parties.

9. c. **the presence of other people produces arousal, which in turn affects performance.** This explanation of social facilitation suggests that the mere presence of other people causes one to become aroused and that this arousal improves performance on easy tasks and impairs performance on difficult tasks. It does not, however, propose that people’s performance is affected by the impression they are making, by the distraction they face, or by how hard they are working.

10. d. **enhance or exaggerate the initial leanings of the group.** Group polarization is exaggeration through group discussion of initial tendencies in the thinking of group members. Because of group polarization, it is very unlikely that people would shift or reverse their position, or even have no change in their position, when discussing their views with like-minded others.

11. b. **believe more strongly that capital punishment is wrong.** Linda is likely to believe more strongly that capital punishment is wrong after discussing this topic with her friends who agree with her because such discussion is likely to lead to group polarization, the tendency for people to gain conviction in their views when discussing them with like-minded others. It is unlikely that Linda would come to favor capital punishment, that her views would be unaffected, or that her friends would challenge her views.

12. c. **groupthink.** Groupthink develops when pressures are exerted to maintain and justify positive feelings about the group, which can sometimes lead to the adoption of ineffective problem-solving strategies. Highly cohesive groups, group structure, and stressful situations are all factors that contribute to such pressures. Group roles are likely to be affected by group structure and stressful situations, but are probably not affected by cohesiveness. And there is no particular reason to believe that highly cohesive groups, group structure, and stressful situations have any effect on the development of free riders or superordinate goals.

13. d. **groupthink.** The board members appear to be overestimating the ability of the group to carry off the project. They also seem to be using a closed-minded approach that rationalizes the correctness of their decision. Finally, because the group makes the decision so quickly, there appears to be some pressure toward uniformity in the group. These are all behavioral symptoms of groupthink. Although people in this situation might be enacting slightly different roles, their reasoning has little to do with their respective roles. In addition, the actions of the group seem to have little to do with either social loafing or mutual cooperation.

14. a. **engage in destructive behaviors.** When people gather together into a crowd, their behavior often becomes violent and destructive. This phenomenon, known as deindividuation, may be responsible for the wanton and disturbing acts committed during riots. When people experience deindividuation, they seem to lose awareness of their own inner standards; this loss of awareness may be responsible for the increase in destructive behaviors. Deindividuation does not, however, cause people to become reserved, to engage in group cooperation, or to be concerned with evaluations by others.

15. a. **engaged in a conflict spiral.** Priscilla and Carol appear to be in conflict, and this conflict appears to be escalating. They are in a conflict spiral. They are not both exhibiting an individualist orientation. Although they are clearly looking out for themselves in this situation (as a person with an individualist orientation would), they are also trying to undermine the other person. Their behavior is consistent with a competitive orientation; however, we do not know their general pattern of behavior from this one instance, and therefore we do not have enough evidence to determine what their orientation is. Nor are they engaged in a public goods dilemma. In a public goods dilemma there is a pool of resources and people must contribute to the pool or the resources will be used up. There is no pool of resources in this example. Finally, Priscilla and Carol are not
restrained by threat capacity. Even though they clearly have the ability to harm one another, it appears that neither one is aware that the other person might harm them in retaliation (a crucial feature of threat capacity), and in any event they do not appear to be restrained by the other person’s ability to do harm.

16. a. **the prisoner’s dilemma.** The prisoner’s dilemma is a classic paradigm in which two people have the option of cooperating or competing. If one player cooperates and the other player competes, the player who competes gets a big payoff. If both players cooperate, then they both receive a moderate payoff. But if they both compete, they both lose a substantial amount. People usually respond to others in kind in this paradigm. The tragedy of the commons, the public goods dilemma, and the free-rider problem are all dilemmas faced by large social groups, so they are easily represented by two people.

17. c. **ulterior motivation on the part of the blue gang.** When two groups are in conflict with one another, they tend to make conflict-maintaining attributions and to see the worst in each other’s actions. In this case, the red gang is likely to be suspicious of the blue gang and think that the blue gang has ulterior motives for this gesture of friendship. Because these groups have a history of conflict, it is unlikely that the red gang will think the blue gang is being kind, attempting to reduce conflict, or changing its leadership. These attributions are all positive, or at least neutral, and the red gang would be likely to search for a less flattering attribution for the blue gang’s behavior.

18. b. **social roles.** Social roles are the specific behaviors carried out by individuals in a group that are expected by most of the group members. Norms are shared expectations for the group that help define the social roles, but they are not the behaviors themselves. Superordinate goals are also shared by the group, but they are not associated with positions within the group. Finally, disjunctive tasks are not related to expectations in a group.

19. a. **GRIT.** GRIT is the acronym for the strategy known as graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension-reduction. This strategy allows one party, without the cooperation of the other party, to attempt to reduce conflict. It involves clear statements of one’s desire to reduce tension, followed by unilateral cooperative actions. If any of these actions elicits cooperation from the other party, then a higher-level cooperative action is initiated in response. GRIT has been shown to be effective in reducing tension between parties. Groupthink and social dilemmas have little to do with reducing tension, and integrative agreements may be enacted to reduce tension but are not a unilateral solution.

20. b. **superordinate goals.** Superordinate goals are common goals that people share and must work together to obtain. It seems likely that Stephanie and Keith both want dessert, and their turn-taking is definitely an activity on which they will have to work together. There is little evidence of group polarization or social dilemmas in this example; and although the mother’s solution may be innovative, it does not constitute an integrative agreement because no bargaining is involved.

21. d. **Written contracts are binding, oral commitments are not.** As the world becomes smaller due to advances in technology and the globalization of business and the economy, as well as due to global threats concerning the environment and terrorism, the ability to negotiate effectively across cultures becomes increasingly important. Table 8.6 lists some common assumptions made by negotiators from western, individualistic cultures that are not always shared by representatives from other cultures.

22. d. **All of the above are correct.** Because of the effects of social facilitation, firefighters, police officers, military personnel, and others must train so much to be ready to make split-second decisions under highly arousing situations. They may seem to practice scenarios to the point of overtraining, but it is only through such repetition that their dominant response can be assured to
typically be the correct one. When in the midst of a raging fire, or military firefight, careful deliberation is often impossible, and arousal will tend to elicit their dominant responses.

**Answers to Essay Questions: Sample Essays**

23. The presence of others can affect people’s performance, productivity, and inclination to engage in destructive acts. When people are in the presence of others, they tend to do better on easy tasks and worse on hard tasks than when they do these tasks alone. This phenomenon, known as social facilitation, may be the result of arousal, distraction, or evaluation apprehension that develops in the presence of others. When people work together on a joint task with others and individual contributions are not identifiable, people tend to be less productive. This phenomenon, known as social loafing, may be the result of a decreased sense of personal responsibility for the outcome of the group’s work. Finally, when people are grouped together with others they do not know, as in a crowd, they tend to engage in destructive actions. This phenomenon, known as deindividuation, seems to result from the distraction from internal standards of conduct that results from the presence of others.

24. Group polarization is the exaggeration through group discussion of initial tendencies in the thinking of group members. This exaggeration or enhancement of convictions appears to result from three processes. First, people hear more persuasive arguments that are consistent with their views when they discuss these views with people who share them. Second, their views may be strengthened when people draw on the support of others as evidence that the views are valid and should be held. Third, an ingroup (consisting of people who share their views) and an outgroup (consisting of people who do not share their views) may be formed. As this social categorization process occurs, the differences between the two groups may be accentuated, and thus strengthening the convictions of the individual members.

25. Two techniques that can lead to the reduction of conflict between groups are graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension-reduction (GRIT) and negotiation. GRIT is a peacemaking strategy that can be used even if the other side is hostile toward the party using it. GRIT involves four basic components. First, a general statement is issued about the group’s intention to reduce conflict. Second, the group carries out an announced tension-reducing initiative even if there is no immediate reciprocation. Third, if the other group initiates cooperation, the group using GRIT responds with at least as much cooperation. But fourth, the group using GRIT must retain enough retaliatory capability to prevent the other group from exploiting the cooperative overtures. Alternatively, negotiation attempts to reduce conflict without actually engaging in destructive activity. Negotiation works best when the negotiators use flexible behavior at the negotiation table to arrive at integrative agreements, resolutions in which all parties obtain outcomes that are superior to what they would have obtained from an equal distribution of the contested resources.

26. Good communication is a key ingredient in successful negotiation. Communication across cultures can present special challenges. Whereas an individualistic perspective emphasizes direct communication and confrontation, a collectivistic perspective emphasizes more indirect information sharing and a desire to avoid direct conflict. Individualistic negotiators may emphasize rationality and a lack of emotion in negotiation, whereas a greater tolerance of contradiction and emotionality is characteristic of a collectivistic style—although emotionality should not be confrontational. Individualists tend to prefer to make compromises and concessions toward the end of a negotiation, whereas collectivists may prefer to begin with generous concessions and gradually reduce their concessions later. Even something that may seem as basic as time is perceived and valued differently as a function of culture.