

## **Suggested lecture/seminar plan for chapter 5 Groups and Teams**

Start the session with the question “what groups or teams am I or have I been a member of?” This will elicit reasons for joining, rituals of membership etc. (10 minutes).

Follow up with “why/how did you join?” table the reasons. (15minutes), benefits, comradeship etc.

Use some of the examples given to tease out differences between groups and teams. E.g. common goals, commitment, administrative convenience. (A good supplementary is, “is -this seminar a group or a team?”) (15minutes)

Next ask “What norms of the college/university do you know about, how did you find out about them?” Follow up with “what purpose do group norms serve?”, e.g. communicating messages, signaling membership etc. (15 minutes)

Conclude with the roles that are played in groups referring to the theoretical approaches taken by Belbin analysis, or TMI. (10 minutes), both covered in detail in the book. Ask the students to consider what the elements of high quality or high performance teams are and if they confirm or contradict the work of Belbin.

### **Guidelines for the chapter questions**

There are 9 questions for this chapter. Some of the questions simply relate to specific concepts which are covered in the text, the guidance presented here concentrates on the more complex questions.

1. How do you think the norms of group behaviour develop over time and how can they be altered?

Group norms are established by the things people do and their attitudes. They can be altered by influential members if they behave differently and have the power to convince others to do the same.

2. According to Harvey and Brown a few key factors will influence the effectiveness of a group, can you think of other issues and factors that might also play a part?

Alongside the factors that Harvey and Brown relate the student should consider

- how the group is managed
- relationship with other groups
- internal relationships
- level of maturity of the group

3. According to the concept known as Risky Shift what is the danger that group decisions can create?

Group decisions might be based on consensus, but deny individuals the right to disagree, minority views might be crowded out and disagreement might lead to exclusion from the group.

4. Team-based rewards promise some advantages but they also carry drawbacks, how would you feel about being rewarded for team based results rather than individual performance?

Here the discussion should focus around motivation, the consequences for team selection and how we can measure contribution accurately. All of the above issues mitigate against development of team based rewards.

6. What do you feel you would enjoy most about working as a team member, and what would be less enjoyable?

Individuals will answer this for themselves but issues such as sociability, learning from others, and being part of a team will probably feature.

7. Why would an informal group tend to be less effective at achieving complex tasks or objectives?

The response looked for here is one that emphasises the lack of structure that an informal group is likely to display. During the creative or brainstorming phase of a

project this is likely to be a positive feature, but once the time for delivery comes, the need for structure, responsibility and joint commitment comes to the fore. If it is a complex task, then the group is more likely to need a sound structure to guide its work, as no one person may be in a position to see the whole picture. The task might be broken down into components but the group will still need to know how the whole project fits together.