Conflict Resolution in Groups: Facilitation and Conflict Management

PAF 424/SOS 624
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Course Description
This intensive workshop focuses on how conflict emerges in groups and how facilitators maintain group effectiveness in the face of conflict. The course uses experiential exercises, cases, and readings to demonstrate both the theories and tools of individual and group conflict and facilitation. A special focus is on the facilitator as manager/leader versus external consultant.

Readings
Required
Schwarz, Roger M. The Skilled Facilitator. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2002. (This is available at Follett’s Orange Bookstore.)

Course Reader (to be distributed electronically)

Student Requirements
• Students are required to attend all sessions.
• Students should complete readings before the class where assigned.
• Students are expected to be prepared, to have completed and to actively participate in all exercises. (33% of grade)
• Students will prepare a daily analysis that applies the readings, skills/knowledge gained from classroom activity to a situation in the student’s professional life. The paper should assess how the situation was handled and might have been handled differently based on the new knowledge and skills (33% of grade)
• After the course, students will submit a research paper (15 pages for graduate students/10 pages for undergraduates) that further explores a particular aspect of group conflict or facilitation through additional readings, analysis, and application. (34%)

• All papers are due June 2, 2008.

Topics and Readings

Day 1
Defining facilitation
Leader as facilitator
Sources of conflict
Reading: Schwarz; Chapters 1, 2, 3, 15, 16

Sources of individual differences
Strategies for assessing and managing differences
Reading: Schwarz; Chapters 4, 5; Schein

Day 2-3
Gilmore Fraweigh “Communication at Work” Instrument
Tool and techniques of facilitation
Group behaviors
Reading: Schwarz; Chapters 10, 12, 4, 6, 8, 9; Rioch, Rahim, Agaziarian and Gant, Thomas, Gersick, Friedman et al.

Day 4
Problem solving
Strategic planning and visioning processes
Reading: Schwarz; Chapter 10; Weisbord

Day 5
Getting organized:
   Contracting
   Designing the process
   The first meeting
Reading: Schwarz; Chapter 11, 13

Evaluation, closure, and celebration
Application discussion
Reading: Schwarz; Chapter 11

Please note that the authors in italics are optional articles.