

## CHAPTER 8. INTERPERSONAL AND GROUP DYNAMICS

### CHAPTER 8 OVERVIEW

#### *Chapter 8 Summary*

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In Chapter 8, the authors explore interpersonal and group dynamics in organizations.

People spend much of their time at work interacting with others. They often find themselves pondering why people behave as they do and what to do about it. Skills in understanding and handling interpersonal relationships are essential for good management, powerful leadership, and effective organizations. The authors argue that interpersonal relationships in organizations most often go awry not because managerial intentions are incorrect or insincere but because managers lack interpersonal competence. Drawing on the work of Argyris and Schön, the authors present a normative model for effective interpersonal behavior in organizations. It requires:

1. Skills in understanding distinctions between espoused theories and managerial theories-in-use.
2. Avoidance of self-protective, Model I patterns of interpersonal interaction that blame others and limit learning.
3. An emphasis on common goals and mutual influence in relationships.
4. Open communication and public testing of assumptions and beliefs.
5. The ability to combine advocacy with inquiry.

In the section on group dynamics, the authors explore the interface between individuals and groups. They note, “Small groups are often condemned for wasting time while producing little, but groups *can* be both satisfying and efficient. In any event, organizations cannot function without them.” The authors discuss the distinction between task and process in group functioning and examine four central human resource issues concerning groups: (1) informal roles; (2) group norms; (3) interpersonal conflict; and (4) leadership and decision making.

Chapter 8 concludes with an exploration of different managerial styles, acknowledging the need for managers to have language and concepts to help them understand and manage individual differences and group dynamics. The authors emphasize that basic understanding of informal roles, norms, interpersonal conflict, and leadership is essential to group effectiveness.

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## Chapter 8 Key Terms

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**Interpersonal competence:** The ability to understand and interact effectively with others; proposed as a basic managerial skill by Argyris; similar to *emotional intelligence*.

**Espoused theory:** An account that individuals provide when describing, explaining, or predicting their behavior.

**Theory-in-use:** An implicit program or set of rules that specifies how to behave; theories-in-use guide what people actually do.

**Model I:** A model of interpersonal behavior embodying the core assumption that organizations are dangerous and competitive and leading to self-protection, secretiveness, and the belief that any problems are caused by others.

**Model II:** Argyris and Schön's alternative to Model I, in which people (1) emphasize common goals and mutual influence; (2) communicate openly and publicly test assumptions and beliefs; and (3) combine advocacy with inquiry.

**Emotional intelligence:** According to Salovey and Mayer, a set of skills that includes awareness of self and others and the ability to handle both emotions and relationships. The term updates the older term *social intelligence*, "the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls—to act wisely in human relations" (Thorndike, 1920, p. 228).

**Consideration:** The degree to which a manager shows concern for and sensitivity to people.

**Initiating structure:** The degree to which a manager actively structures subordinates' activities.

**Group norms:** Informal rules that govern how the group will function and how members will conduct themselves.

## Chapter 8 Major Case Examples

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- The case of Anne Barreta
- Enron
- The task group: Karen, Bob, Teresa, Tony, and Susan
- The "friendly fire" incident in Iraq
- The camping families

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## SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING CHAPTER 8

The central ideas in Chapter 8 revolve around the dynamics, difficulties, and dilemmas of human interaction. Instructors can focus on:

1. Understanding the complexities of interpersonal exchanges.
2. Exploring group dynamics.
3. Developing managerial skills for handling interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

Teaching methods appropriate for each approach are described in the sections that follow. Student exercises keyed to the approaches appear in “Student Exercises for Chapter 8,” beginning on page 12.

### **Chapter 8: A Focus on Understanding Interpersonal Exchanges** \_\_\_\_\_

Interpersonal interactions are filled with potential for confusion, ambiguity, and misunderstandings. Exploring why this is so and what can be done is one possible focus for working with Chapter 8.

### **Chapter 8: Cases Focusing on Understanding Interpersonal Exchanges**

The Anne Barreta case presented in the chapter is a perfect starting place for a focus on understanding interpersonal exchanges, and many other cases that lend themselves to this focus are available as well.

- The Anne Barreta case is rich in possibilities, and the gender and affirmative action issues keep things lively despite the amount of case analysis that the authors provide in the chapter. In fact, some of the power of discussing this case comes from the very fact that students who have read the chapter often feel as if they already know everything that *really* happened here.

Instructors can use the Barreta case to reinforce the reality that things are never as simple and straightforward as they seem at a first glance. They can push to explore the wide number of possible explanations for what might really be going on here—for example, what if it was not Harry that started the rumor? Who might have and why? What if it was Steve? What might his motivation be? What might he gain from all this? By casting doubts on the seemingly obvious role that Harry played in all this, students in large or small groups can devise strategies for testing their various assumptions and hunches. Since there is a good chance that many of the strategies will fall into Model I theories-in-use and mystery-mastery models of interpersonal behavior, instructors can work these issues into their processing of student strategies.

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There are other ways to work with the Anne Barreta case as well. For example, focus not solely on Anne and Harry but on Steve and how a manager deals with strong conflicts and tensions between two subordinates. Students in large or small groups can examine Steve's management style, his strategies for managing Anne and Harry, his responses to the rumor situation, his choice of setting for the meeting with Anne, the ways in which he has contributed to the situation that Anne finds herself in, and so on. Another idea is presented in Exercise 8.1.

Many other cases in a wide variety of settings are perfect for exploring interpersonal behavior in organizations.

- The HBS course “Managing Difficult Conversations,” available on CD-ROM (#2829C) and as an on-line learning tool (#2829D), can be used in conjunction with or as an alternative to the Barreta case. Based on the work of both Chris Argyris and Peter Senge, it combines a case of conflict at work with exploration of the impact of mental models and the differences between Model I and Model II approaches.
- In Lisa Benton ([A] [HBS 4-494-114]), a young manager finds that the people challenges in her first job are much tougher than she anticipated.
- Jensen Shoes: Lyndon Twitchell's Story (HBS 395-121) and Jensen Shoes: Jane Kravitz's Story (HBS 395-120) tell the story of a relationship from the perspective of two people who see things very differently: the boss (Jane Kravitz, a Caucasian woman) and a subordinate (Lyndon Twitchell, African American man). It illustrates many of the interpersonal dynamics discussed in the chapter, Options in teaching include giving one of the cases to half the class and the other case to the other half. The case lends itself to role playing. A teaching note (HBS 396-017) is available.
- Betty Randall (HBS 9-403-017) complements the Barreta case in that it explores the relationships among a high-powered young employee, her boss, and competitive older co-workers.
- Another powerful case is Karen Leary ([A] [HBS 1-487-020], [B] [HBS 1-487-021], and [C] [HBS 1-487-022]). Leary, the manager of a brokerage office, has difficulty working with a Taiwanese native she hired to sell to other Taiwanese. An insightful teaching note (HBS 5-487-071) helps to develop the intersecting interpersonal and cultural issues in the case.
- Betsy Morgan ([A] [HBS 9-481-093], [B] [HBS 9-481-094], teaching note HBS 5-485-117) deals with themes of gender, discrimination, and sexual harassment in the workplace.

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- Erik Peterson ([A] [HBS 9-494-005], [B] [HBS 9-494-006], [C] [HBS 9-494-007], [D] [HBS 9-494-008], and [E] [HBS 9-494-009]) describes the struggles of a recent MBA graduate in his relationship with his boss.

Still other possibilities include cases that focus on specific areas:

- *Managing interpersonal conflicts:*
  - Mr. Hart and Mr. Bing (or an updated version in an educational setting, Mr. Dale and Mr. Shumann) (HBS 9-403-018).
  - Neely and Chapman Company (HBS 9-470-016).
  - Michael Jones (HBS unnumbered).
  - S. S. Cowrie (HBS 9-403-032).
  - Texana Petroleum Corp. (HBS 9-413-056).
  - Acting Out of Character (HBS 9-414-012).
  - Chris Cunningham (HBS 9-486-060).
  - Sheila Lund ([A] [HBS 9-381-215], in a liberal arts setting, or [B] [HBS 9-381-216], in a business school setting).
- *Misunderstandings arising from different world views and frames of reference:*
  - John Martin (HBS 9-470-013).
  - Bob Knowlton: The Road to Hell (HBS 9-480-074).
  - Thom Sailer ([A] [HBS 9-475-098] and [B] [HBS 9-475-099]).
  - Showa-Packard Ltd. (HBS 9-373-348).
  - Jan Vanvoort (HBS 9-478-016).
  - David Connolly (HBS 9-480-040).
  - Jody McVay ([A] [HBS 9-482-063] and [B] [HBS 9-482-064]).
  - The Avianca Airlines case and communications activities in Marx, Jick, and Frost's *Management Live: The Video Book*, in which the authors explore critical communications issues.

Finally, students can prepare their own personal cases, as described in Exercise 8.2.

## **Chapter 8: Films or Videos Focusing on Understanding Interpersonal Exchanges**

Many training films and videos explore various aspects of interpersonal exchanges. Suggested films include:

- *The Eye of the Beholder* (BNA)—a classic perception film from the 1950s that dramatically explores how perception affects the ways in which we interact with others.

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- *Perception: Key to Effective Management* (CRM)—suggests the need for managers to check the impact of their perceptions.
- *Communications: Barriers and Pathways* (IU)—describes interpersonal, intrapersonal, and environmental factors that can affect communications.
- *As Others See Us: A Look at Interpersonal Relationships* (Salenger)—an animated film (also available in video) using the Johari Window to explore discrepancies between how we see ourselves and how others view us.
- *Verbal Communication: the Power of Words* (CRM)—uses a workplace dramatization to discuss how communication goes awry and what to do about it
- *Nonverbal Communication* (Salenger)—explores how nonverbal factors affect our communications with others (also available in video).
- *Communicating Non-Defensively* (CRM)—illustrates defensive behavior and suggests strategies for managing it.
- *The Abilene Paradox* (CRM)—the classic story about how assumptions can lead to disastrous choices that no one really wants.
- *Sexual Harassment from 9 to 5*, *Managing Diversity*, and *Men and Women Working Together* (all from FH), *Pigeonholed in the Land of Penguins* (CRM), and *Valuing Diversity* (Insight)—deal with issues of diversity and gender in the workplace.

Instructors can also use a movie to explore the role and power of individual differences in interpersonal interactions. (Many of the films listed in the teaching notes for Chapter 6 can also be used for discussion of the topics in Chapter 8.)

- The film *The Breakfast Club* is particularly good in working with undergraduates to explore these concerns. The scene near the film's end in which five very different high school students begin to talk about their backgrounds and self-concepts and how those affect their choices and projected self-images is perfect for this purpose.
- *Kiss of the Spider Woman* explores similar issues between two men with different political and sexual orientations.
- *Beaches* illustrates the ways in which self-concept, career success, and satisfaction with life choices affect interpersonal interactions and the long-term friendship between two very different women.

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- *On Golden Pond* provides a poignant examination of interpersonal dynamics in a family context in the father-daughter relationship played by Jane and Henry Fonda.

## **Chapter 8: A Focus on Group Dynamics**

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An alternative focus for this chapter is understanding group dynamics and working with group process issues. Many of the suggestions provided in the teaching notes for Chapter 5 can be used to examine interpersonal behavior and human resource issues in groups. Instructors may want to return to the same movie, case, or simulation that they used in Chapter 5 to examine structural aspects of groups, particularly if students have not already had an opportunity in class to experience reframing the same event or information from an alternative perspective. For example, Exercise 8.3 is an adaptation of the Construction Company simulation from Chapter 5.

### **Chapter 8: Cases Focusing on Group Dynamics**

Cases that explore specific aspects of group dynamics include:

- *Teamwork:*
  - Mod IV Product Development Team (HBS 9-491-030) describes the experience of a cross-functional team with a challenging assignment from the perspective of a team member, a manager, and an executive.
  - Chapter Enrichment Program Teams at the American Red Cross (HBS 9-402-042) focuses on the dilemma of too much versus too little structure for teams in a nonprofit context.
- *The informal organization and norms:*
  - The Slade Company (HBS 9-406-074).
  - Banana Time.
  - Claremont Instruments Co. (HBS 9-406-032).
- *Managerial responses to challenging group dynamics:*
  - Bob Knowlton.
  - Elizabeth Best ([C] [HBS 9-675-125] and [D] [HBS 9-675-126]).
  - Seneca University (ACE).
  - Ralph Langley and the American Radiatronics Corp. ([A] [HBS 9-409-071], [B] [HBS 9-409-072], [C] [HBS 9-409-073], and [D] [HBS 9-409-074]).

### **Chapter 8: Films or Videos Focusing on Group Dynamics**

- A pair of video cases, Office Technology, Inc.: Members of the OEM Group (HBS 9-884-512) and Office Technology, Inc.: Members of the LMP Group (HBS 9-884-513), look at two semi-autonomous work groups. The groups were created in the same organization, but one is struggling more than the other.

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- A series of videos from Workvideos, mentioned in the teaching notes to Chapter 5, focuses on highly effective teams:
  - *Computer Emergency Response Team* tells the story of a group at Carnegie-Mellon University whose mission is rapid response to attacks on the Internet.
  - *Chamber Music Quartet* focuses on a noted string quartet, the Cuarteto Latinoamericano.
  - *Chinese String Quartet* tells a parallel story of a quartet based in Singapore that plays traditional Chinese stringed instruments.
  - *Rowing in an 8* explores the story behind the success of an undefeated women's crew at Cornell.Preview clips from most of the videos are available at <http://www.workvideos.com/>.
- The HBS video *The Meeting of the Overhead Reduction Task Force*, also mentioned in the teaching notes to Chapter 5, is especially well suited to examining group dynamics and interpersonal behavior among group members.
- The classic feature film *12 Angry Men* (Hartwick distributes a kit that includes the film, a case study, and teaching note) explores the intense dynamics in a jury for a murder trial, and provides rich opportunities for exploring a range of interpersonal and group dynamics.
- Two powerful film examples of group dynamics in crisis situations are *Lord of the Flies* (based on William Golding's novel about a group of English schoolboys stranded on a desert island) and *Flight of the Phoenix* (depicting the struggles of a group of plane crash survivors). Hartwick distributes case materials and teaching notes for both.

Many training and development films explore group dynamics, group process, and team building. Instructors may want to use one or more of the following films as the basis for class discussion:

- *Team Building* (CRM)—explores the various styles that individuals bring to groups and discusses how to mesh individual differences to create an effective team.
- *Meeting Robbers* (CRM)—focuses on the challenges of dealing with individuals who undermine team productivity
- *The Abilene Paradox* (CRM)—examines the classic group tendency to make assumptions and suppress objections.
- *Group Dynamics: Groupthink* (CRM)—illustrates the sources and motivations for groupthink and the implications for group decision making.

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- *Anatomy of a Group* (IU)—examines the foundations of group formation and development.
- *Japan, Inc.: Lessons for North America?* (Salenger)—explores the essence of Japanese productivity: the small work group.

### **Chapter 8: Activities Focusing on Group Dynamics**

In courses that use student teams, it makes sense to provide opportunities for students to apply concepts from the chapter to their own group experiences. Each group can be asked to discuss the roles, norms, leadership patterns, and ways of dealing with conflict that have evolved in the group. Such activities can be combined with in-class fishbowl activities in which teams observe one another. (See Exercise 8.4 for an example.)

Students new to group process or weak in understanding of group dynamics might want to read one of the works on process consultation by E. H. Schein and/or the “Note on Process Observation” (HBS 9-477-029) as a way of augmenting the materials on group dynamics offered in Chapter 8.

### **Chapter 8: A Focus on Interpersonal Skills for Management**\_\_\_\_\_

An alternative focus for Chapter 8 is to work on developing the skills essential for managing interpersonal relationships at work. Through case discussion or movie analysis, instructors can help students identify and isolate critical interpersonal skills for good management and effective leadership. Through role playing, skills practice sessions, experiential exercises, and simulations, they can offer students opportunities to diagnose and fine-tune their own interpersonal competencies.

### **Chapter 8: Films or Videos Focusing on Interpersonal Skills for Management**

Films that guarantee lively discussion of critical interpersonal skills include:

- *Lean on Me*—Joe Clark’s initial meeting with his school staff, his first meeting with irate parents, or his various meetings with the vice-principal can be used individually or as a sequence to illustrate different needs in different circumstances.
- *Dead Poets Society*—focus on the contrasts between Professor Keating’s and the headmaster’s interactions with students.
- *Office Space*, *Nine to Five*, and *Working Girl* are among the films suggested for Chapter 6 that can also be used to explore interpersonal relations in the workplace.

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- *Disclosure* and *Glengarry Glen Ross* explore the dark side of interpersonal relations at work. In *Disclosure*, each scene seems to show yet another way in which interpersonal relations at work can go awry. In *Glengarry Glen Ross*—if your students can tolerate the pungent language—the sales conference early in the film in which Alex Baldwin’s character attempts motivation by humiliation is very powerful.

## Chapter 8: Activities Focusing on Interpersonal Skills for Management

Almost any of the cases suggested under “Chapter 8: Cases Focusing on Understanding Interpersonal Exchanges” and “Chapter 8: Cases Focusing on Group Dynamics” can form the basis for activities to explore not only what should be done but how to go about doing it: What kinds of skills and abilities would maximize success here? What would lead to effective implementation of the leader’s key decisions or strategies? Instructors might want to discuss these questions in the large group, send students into small groups to prepare role plays, and then return to the large group to explore a number of the student role plays.

One option is “leadership challenges”—structured mini-simulations built around a case situation (see Exercise 8.5 for an example). Students find such simulations challenging and involving. When several groups present the same situation, the multiple rounds typically provide compelling evidence that the same situation can produce widely varying outcomes, depending on individuals’ approaches. If the leadership-challenge model is used more than once in a course, simulations can be increasingly complex, with multiple roles: a boss trying to resolve a dispute among a pair of subordinates or a team leader trying to solve a sticky group problem.

Another option is for instructors to select one or more key interpersonal skills and to devote class time to skills acquisition and practice. Options include the following:

1. *Effective listening*. Create student pairs for mini-debates. Assign the “pro” position to one member of the dyad and the “con” to the other. Once the conversations get under way, periodically stop the action and ask the students to reflect back to their partners the statement that they have just heard. As advance preparation, you might do one of the following:
  - Assign “Developing Skills in Listening” (HBS 9-479-033) and “Reflective Techniques in a Broader Perspective: Directive as Well as Reflective Leads and Responses” (HBS 9-475-042).
  - Use the classic film *Gloria*, film no. 1 in the *Three Approaches to Psychotherapy* series (PF), which shows Carl Rogers conducting a therapy session with Gloria using only reflective techniques. You can stop the film any number of times after a statement by Gloria, ask students to prepare the appropriate reflection, collect and examine some of their responses, and then look at what Rogers actually did and its impact.

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- Use a training and development film such as *Listen to Communicate* (CRM) or *The Power of Listening* (CRM) as a preface to these activities or by itself to explore the skills and dynamics of effective listening.
2. *Gathering information and interviewing.* Provide students with a job description and a set of organizational needs and conditions. In small groups, students can prepare to conduct an interview with a possible candidate. You might role-play the job candidate yourself, prepare a student to assume the role, or invite an experienced guest to play the role and then discuss the implications on the basis of his or her own organizational experiences.

Alternatively, you can use the training video *The Interview: What to Expect* (PSU) to examine actual on-campus interviews of Penn State students by recruiters from major companies. The film leads to good discussion of effective interview strategies for both interviewer and interviewee.

In preparation for either activity, you may want to assign S. Trull, “Strategies for Effective Interviewing,” *Harvard Business Review*, January–February 1964, reprint #64112; Jencks and Zevnik, “ABCs of Job Interviewing,” *Harvard Business Review*, July 1989, reprint # 89408; or Martin Yates, *Hiring the Best: A Manager’s Guide to Effective Interviewing* (Adams Media, 1997)
  3. *Giving and receiving feedback:* Students can practice giving and receiving feedback on the basis of first impressions, work in case or task groups, or involvement in an in-class activity or simulation such as The Construction Company. You can also ask for feedback on the course, which offers the added benefit of learning about student reactions to classroom events. The training films *Who’s Perfect? How to Give and Receive Criticism* (Salenger) and *Communicating Non-Defensively* (CRM) can stimulate good dialogue about the difficulties of giving and receiving effective feedback.
  4. *Developing group diagnostic and intervention skills:* Use one of the ideas for in-class fishbowls suggested in Exercise 8.4, stopping the action periodically so that observers can report what they see and what, if anything, they might do to intervene at that point. You might assign “Note on Process Observation” (HBS 9-477-029) or one of Schein’s works on process consultation as advance preparation.
  5. *Inquiry-advocacy practice:* Use any of the cases suggested for Chapter 8 to create a role play in which students work on improving their ability to advocate a position and to inquire into others’ thoughts and feelings. “Reflective Techniques in a Broader Perspective: Directive and Reflective Leads and Responses” (HBS 9-475-042) is useful for presenting a wide range of advocacy and inquiry options.
  6. *Conflict management:* Role plays from cases such as Anne Barreta; Nuclear Tube Assembly Room (HBS 9-477-070) and the accompanying Process Engineering
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Proposal (HBS 9-478-008); Mr. Dale and Mr. Shumann (HBS 9-403-018); Neely and Chapman Company (HBS 9-470-016); S. S. Cowrie (HBS 9-403-032); Texana Petroleum Corp. (HBS 9-413-056); Acting Out of Character (HBS 9-414-012); and Chris Cunningham (HBS 9-486-060) are perfect for testing strategies to manage overt or potential conflicts. The training film *Conflict on the Line: A Case Study* (CRM), in which a manager finds himself in the middle of a clash between two valuable employees, can also serve as the basis for role play or discussion.

Instructors may want students to read Fisher and Ury's *Getting to Yes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992) or Fisher and Brown's *Getting Together: Building Relationships as We Negotiate* (New York: Penguin Book, 1989) in preparation for this session. (Conflict and its management will also be a central issue in the political frame chapters to come.)

Additional information and activities about skills development for instructors who want to focus more heavily in this area can be found in D. Whetten and K. Cameron's *Developing Management Skills*, 5th ed. (Pearson Education, 2001) and L. Mainiero and C. Tromley, *Developing Managerial Skills in Organizational Behavior: Exercises, Cases and Readings*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1993).

## STUDENT EXERCISES FOR CHAPTER 8

### EXERCISE 8.1

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**Focus:** Understanding Interpersonal Exchanges

This exercise uses the Anne Baretta case presented in the chapter. Students are to role-play a meeting between Anne and Harry. This exercise can be powerful because, despite the suggestions for Model II responses in the chapter, there is a good chance that students will reproduce self-protective Model I behavior. Instructors can work to explore the implications of the Model I behavior, the distinctions between intentions and actual behavior, and the difficulties in producing alternatives to Model I in the workplace.

Students should work in small groups to prepare their role play; then one or two can be done in the large group. Half the groups can prepare someone to be Anne, while the other half prepare someone to be Harry. Ask students to state their goals and intentions before they begin. Ask the person playing Anne, for example: What are you planning to do in this meeting with Harry? What are you hoping to accomplish? Record the responses on paper or on the blackboard. Afterward, the class will have data for comparing the espoused theory of the key players with the actual theories-in-use that emerged in the role play.

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During the role play, if Anne falters, call a time out and allow Anne to get consulting help from her group. Or call a time out and get a new volunteer to come in and pick up the meeting where it left off.

## **EXERCISE 8.2**

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**Focus:** Understanding Interpersonal Exchanges

Work directly with students' experiences by asking them to write a short personal case that illustrates a difficult interpersonal exchange between themselves and another individual. Students should reconstruct part of the actual dialogue in the interaction. Then, working in small groups, they are to:

1. Analyze what happened, using ideas from Chapter 8 about Model I behavior, strategies for managing conflict, and suggestions for improving interpersonal competence.
2. Explore what they might have done differently.

If four-frame personal cases are a course requirement, instructors can ask students to explore similar issues in those papers.

## **EXERCISE 8.3**

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**Focus:** Group Dynamics

The Construction Company simulation developed by Lee Bolman and Barbara Bunker, presented as Exercise 5.3, can be adapted to explore issues such as how the group made decisions, what norms evolved to govern group behavior, who had power and how they got it, who the leader was, how the group managed its conflicts and disagreements, what roles individual members assumed, how well the group attended to task issues, and how well they attended to process and group maintenance issues. You can also add a student group process observer to each task group or assume the role of wandering consultant to offer groups an outside perspective on their dynamics. (If student observers are being used, instructors should provide guidelines and work with the observers to prepare them for their roles.)

Instructions for the simulation are as follows:

*Task:* To construct the greatest number of houses according to specifications in one five-minute building period.

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*Materials:* 200 3-by-5 index cards, two red and two black felt-tipped markers, and one roll of clear tape for each work group.

*Room arrangement:* Space for each team to plan and one designated space for public construction (a large table or desk is perfect).

*Process:*

- Teams may plan for as long as they wish.
- Each team will have one five-minute public construction period.
- No materials that have been bent, folded, torn, taped, or marked may be used in the public construction phase.
- When teams are ready to start their construction, they should notify the instructor, who also acts as the judge.
- Building permits cost \$2 per group and are to be purchased when a group is ready to build. (Instructors can vary the amount depending on the group.)
- The judge will announce when any team is entering public construction.
- All teams must begin construction by a time posted by the instructor. Only one team can construct at a time. If two teams request a permit to build at the same time, the judge shall determine to whom the first permit is issued. All decisions of the judge are final.
- The winning team will be awarded the money in the building fund.

*House specifications:* All houses must:

- Be two stories high.
- Have a peaked roof.
- Have a brick chimney with holes for smoke (that is, more than one dimension).
- Have at least four framed windows on the second floor and two doors and two windows on the first floor.
- Have a floor between stories.
- Withstand the judge's quality test: a drop from five inches without being damaged or falling apart.

*Time requirements:* At least one and one-fourth to one and one-half hours for teams to work before the construction deadline. Time should be set aside for groups to debrief and then for a general class discussion.

## **EXERCISE 8.4**

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**Focus:** Group Dynamics

To examine group dynamics, have a fishbowl group discuss its norms (or leadership, or roles, or another issue that you would like the groups explore) while members of an

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observing group look for the norms (or whatever topic the group is discussing) that they see in the group's functioning and then give feedback. Possible activities for the small groups in the fishbowl include the following:

1. *Ongoing tasks.* If case or task groups already exist in class, pair two existing groups and ask the groups to alternate being observers and working on the regular task while being observed.
2. *Discussions of group dynamics.* Ongoing task or case groups can also meet in fishbowls for the purpose of discussing their own dynamics. Observers can provide feedback that can supplement the group's own analysis of its processes.
3. *Experiential activities.* Have either ongoing groups or new groups engage in an experiential activity. For example, assign a task such as the ranking of lists—the qualities of a good leader, the characteristics of a well-run group, the essentials for good management, or Lost on the Moon or its many variations. A. Schuh and P. Schuh's "Titanic Organization" activity, as described in *Organizational Behavior Teaching Review*, 1989–90, 14(4), is a possible choice, as are any of the group problem-solving activities listed in the teaching notes to Chapter 5 or many of the group-focused exercises described in Dorothy Marcic, Peter Vaill, and Joe Seltzer, *Organizational Behavior: Experiences and Cases*, 6th ed. (South Western, 2000).
4. *Explorations of a minicase.* Offer a short minicase, asking the group to decide on a course of action for the principal players. Write up a paragraph or two about a simple situation that is relevant for the student audience or find a newspaper article about an engaging or controversial current event.
5. *Solution of an actual group problem.* Ask ongoing groups to make a decision about something that affects group members. Choosing among possible assignments, allocating a scarce resource such as extra reference books, and determining what weight various assignments will have in members' final grades are possibilities. If ongoing groups are not part of the course, create new groups that need to reach consensus on some choice—such as choosing among possible course assignments or selecting a case for the final take-home exam—knowing that the suggestion made by the majority of groups will apply to the entire class.

## EXERCISE 8.5

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### **Focus:** Interpersonal Skills for Management

This exercise involves a leadership challenge mini-simulation build around the Karen Leary case ([A] [HBS 1-487-020], [B] [HBS 1-487-021], and [C] [HBS 1-487-022]), in

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which a brokerage manager has trouble working with a Taiwanese native she has hired, Ted Chung. (Alternatively, you might use the Anne Barreta case from the text.)

Ask teams to prepare one member to be Leary, and another to be Chung. The role plays are held in multiple rounds (depending on class size and format). In round 1, a Leary from Team 1 meets with a Chung from Team 2. The role play is allowed to run for about ten minutes, followed by a debrief. Then, in round 2, a Leary from Team 2 meets with a Chung from Team 3, and so on.

Role-players can be graded on both their effectiveness in the situation and their fidelity to role, with input from rating sheets filled out by the class, along with instructor input. The same design could also be used with the Anne Barreta case or many of the other suggested cases that focus on interpersonal dynamics.