

Collaborative Learning

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Course Information

Course Description

In this online course you will explore and develop the skills, values and knowledge that contribute to collaborative learning. Today, perhaps more than any other time in human history, we are aware that no one is an island. At the individual, organizational and societal levels, we are all interconnected and interdependent. We can only meet our goals and address our problems at any of these levels by working together. Therefore, as never before, we need to learn how to learn together.

Collaborative learning is the process of two or more people helping each other to deepen and expand their shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities they face. It involves stimulating new insights in one another, and helping each other make changes in our assumptions, beliefs and behaviors. Collaborative learning can happen anywhere: at home, at work, with friends, families, at school or in community organizations.

In this class:

- You will read Edgar Schein's book *Process Consultation Revisited*, which is about the theory and skills of helping each other learn.
- You will learn about and practice your skills on a regular basis with two other learners in the course via telephone or in a WIMBA virtual classroom and you will assess yourself and both partners on the learning experience.
- You will participate in and be assessed on informal, weekly online discussions to share what you are learning **and** practice what you are learning as well as learn with your classmates.
- You will have the opportunity to give and receive feedback with partners and classmates about the process of learning collaboratively.
- You will create and be assessed on a personal development plan that documents specific steps that you will take to build on the learning from the class.
- Finally, you will submit and be assessed on five formal learning demonstration essays and be assessed on your participation in the class discussions.

Course Learning Goals

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Reflect on the effectiveness of the different roles ("expert," "doctor," or "process consultant") you adopt when you try to help others learn.
- Apply the psychodynamics of building a collaborative learning relationship.
- Use active listening and inquiry skills appropriately to establish and maintain a collaborative learning relationship.
- Identify, explain and reflect on intra-psychic processes involved in collaborative learning.
- Identify, explain and reflect on hidden cultural processes involved in collaborative learning.
- Exchange deliberate feedback using clearly understood principles to facilitate collaborative learning.
- Intervene in a group or organization's task processes to facilitate collaborative learning.
- Intervene in a group's interpersonal processes to facilitate collaborative learning.
- Explain how the principles of process consultation support collaborative learning.

Course Resources

Required Textbook

Edgar H. Schein. (1999). *Process Consultation Revisited: Building the Helping Relationship*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

(To buy your book, go to <http://www.mbsdirect.net> . Type in "DePaul" for name of the school.)

You are expected to read both the weekly information in course modules on Blackboard, and text according to the schedule provided. Other readings may be announced as the course develops. Complete all reading assignments in a timely fashion so you can fully meet the class expectations with regard to your participation in class discussions, collaborative learning practice pairs and formal essays.

Course Competences

You can earn one competence (for 2 credit hours) or two competencies (for 4 credit hours) in this course. When you register you may select one or two of the following competencies: L-7, H-2-C, F-X.

The competence statements are:

L-7: Can learn collaboratively and examine the skills, knowledge, and values that contribute to such learning.

You will achieve this competence in this course by learning how process consultation skills can contribute to collaborative learning. Specifically you need to:

- Articulate the difference between learning independently and learning collaboratively.
- Discuss at least three ways in which you approach collaborative learning differently than before the class.
- Describe how to create an online and face-to-face environment that supports collaborative learning.

H-2-C: Can identify an organizational problem and design a plan for change based on

an understanding of change theories or models.

All organizations need to develop their abilities for collaborative learning. You will achieve this competence in this course by learning how process consultation skills can contribute to collaborative learning about an organizational problem. Specifically you need to:

- Identify and describe one or more problems of strategy, structure or process that affect an organization.
- Use Process Consultation to address this problem(s).
- Discuss how learning collaboratively benefits organizations.

F-X: Can help individuals and groups learn by stimulating insight and facilitating changes in behavior, beliefs or underlying assumptions.

This is the definition of collaborative learning. You will achieve this competence in this course by learning how process consultation skills can contribute to collaborative learning. Specifically you need to:

- Differentiate between active inquiry and persuasion.
- Frame and ask effective questions.
- Discuss how "deliberate feedback" supports learning.

Please note: the wording of the FX competence may be negotiated with the instructor to fit your individual interests. **If you wish to explore an alternate FX competence statement, you must contact the instructor during the first week of class.**

Course Structure and Schedule

The course is divided into an introduction and four modules. The modules are subdivided into a total of nine units. All units are one week long.

You will learn and develop the competencies in this course through readings, collaborative learning practice with classmates, informal online discussions and formal essays. **Your essays are the primary place to demonstrate you have developed the competencies.**

To view the course schedule, click on the Schedule link on the left-hand navigation bar. This page contains a list of the general discussion topics and the specific assignments due each week.

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Assessment

Assessment Criteria for Writing Assignments

1. General Content and Formatting Requirements for Essays

You are required to submit five formal learning demonstration essays to the instructor. Each essay covers two weeks.

Purpose: These essays are your opportunity to write about what you have learned individually and collaboratively in this class and to do so in a way that "shows":

- What you have learned,

- How you learned it and
- How you will apply it in the future.

Audience: Write for a reader who knows nothing about the material or concepts in this class. This requires you to be very clear, specific and descriptive about your points. Your job is not to re-write what the authors have written, but to tell what you have learned. Imagine you are telling a friend what you have learned over the past two weeks, how you learned it (from something you read, from something that happened with your partners, in the online discussion or elsewhere), and how you plan to use this learning in the future.

How to start: Begin your essay with an introductory paragraph in which you give your reader an overview of the points you will cover in your essay in the order in which you will cover them. For more information on how to write introductions, see: <http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/introduction.html>. Then clearly weave together your thoughts on the subject of your essay.

Sources: Each essay should draw on what you learned from your text, online discussions and work with both your partners as its primary sources. Secondary sources are the additional readings in the modules and your experiences outside the class. **Do not use any sources other than these.**

Connecting to competence criteria: In each essay you should also clearly demonstrate the competence (or competencies) you are taking. This means that in the body of each essay you need to connect your learning to demonstrating the three bullets/facets of each competence. In this class, "to demonstrate" these means that you "do" them. E.g. to demonstrate the first bullet of L7 in an essay you need to quote directly from that point in the body of your paper and then discuss your current insights about how learning independently is different than learning collaboratively. Each facet should be addressed in each essay based on what you have learned during the prior two weeks.

Your instructor will provide detailed feedback on your essays. Read it and clarify any questions about it so you can incorporate it into subsequent essays.

Help: For personalized help on writing contact DePaul's Writing Center at: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/> or <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/html/stud/planning/quick.html>.

Format and write each essay in the following way:

- At the top of the first page, put your name, the competence statement and associated facets, and the word count for the body of the essay. (Note: each essay for students taking one competence is limited to 550 words; the word limit for essays addressing two competences is 1100 words.)
- Paste the Essay Assessment Form as the last page of your essay.
- Follow accepted standards of English spelling, grammar and citing sources. Use MLA citation style and be sure to cite references to the text or other assigned readings.
- Do not write in stream of consciousness style.

2. Personal Development Plan

Your capstone assignment is a specific written plan describing how you will continue to develop your collaborative learning skills based on what you learned in this class. There is no limit for word count or requirement for referencing competencies in this assignment. However, the word count limit for the essays is a good guideline.

Format and write your plan in the following way:

- Use the first four assessment criteria for your personal development plan (listed below) as headings for your plan.
- Clearly and completely address each point.

IMPORTANT: If you hand in written work that does not adhere to the required style and formatting guidelines, you will be asked to revise it before it is graded. You may also be referred to DePaul's Writing Center.

NOTE: Late written work will be penalized; written work more than one week late may not be accepted. If you need an extension to complete a written assignment, request it before the assignment is late – preferably at least 24 hours prior to the essay deadline.

Assessment Criteria for Collaborative Learning Practice Pairs

1. General Expectations for Collaborative Learning Pairs

After registration closes you will be assigned two collaborative learning partners. These partnerships will be posted on Blackboard and emailed to you. In these partnerships you will practice the skills explained by Edgar Schein in our textbook, *Process Consultation Revisited*.

Starting Week 2 you will practice collaborative learning with each partner once a week for 30 minutes. For the first five sessions you will spend one hour per week engaged in collaborative learning with these two classmates: a half hour with one partner where you are in the "consultant" role and a separate half hour with a different partner where you are in the "client" role. These roles are described in the class text. Specific instructions for these collaborative learning practice sessions are below and the exercises are described in the week's reading on Blackboard.

The purpose of partner work is to learn about the process and skills required to learn collaboratively; these sessions are not role-playing. Be yourself. When in the consultant role, do not pretend to have skills or expertise other than what you really have. When in the client role, discuss real issues that you think appropriate for the assignment. **Focus on what you are learning about "how" to learn with/help another person by applying what you have read about in the text. Do NOT get caught up focusing on the subject matter of the issue brought to the exercise.**

At a minimum, at the end of each meeting, use the criteria on which you will assess yourself and your partners (listed below) to have a conversation with your partners to help each other learn.

After completing five exercises, you will have a final 30-minute session with each partner Week 7 to practice giving and receiving a specific kind of feedback using specific principles learned in the class. Then you will submit written assessments of yourself in both your roles and assessments for both your partners. Assessment forms are in the assignment area for the relevant week.

The instructor will not "grade" these assessments and will not share them with your partners, however they are part of your final grade and must include comprehensive, specific narrative clearly explaining why you rated yourself and your partners as you did. **Assessments without sufficient narrative will be returned to be redone and may impact your grade for the assignment.**

2. Basic Ground Rules for Collaborative Learning Pairs

For both roles:

- Have your meetings over the telephone or use Skype, Microsoft Messenger or other similar voice technologies. Or you may request a private WIMBA classroom for your meetings. If using WIMBA for your meetings, you will be expected to archive them. Email or text messaging is NOT acceptable.
- Reply to each other's emails in no more than 48 hours. Communicate any problems making contact with a partner to the instructor immediately.
- Keep scheduled appointments and respect each other's time.
- Conduct your exercises in an area free of distractions.
- To demonstrate what you are learning from these sessions, you will need to share some aspects of the sessions with other classmates and the instructor. Outside the practice sessions you can share:
 - your reflection *on the skills that you and your partner used*
 - *the way you worked together*
 - *insights or learnings you gained by doing the exercises.*
- If an unavoidable circumstance occurs that makes it impossible for you to keep your appointment, you should give your partner 24 hours notice and both make a good faith effort to reschedule the meeting.
- If you cannot make an appointment and do not give your partner at least 24 hours notice, your partner is under no obligation to do so. **Important:** Failing to keep appointments or complete all exercises will lower your final grade.

In your role as consultant:

- You are responsible to initiate and maintain contact with your client partner. Make your initial contact immediately after receiving your assignment to introduce yourself and schedule appointments for the weekly meeting.
- Do not share the subject matter that your client talks about in your exercises with anyone, including the instructor. It is confidential. **Breaching confidentiality and sharing your client's topics is a very serious matter and may impact your grade. Posts made that include such content will be removed from the discussion.**

In your role as client:

- Reply within 48 hours to your consultant's introduction and throughout the class.
- You are free to choose to share (or not share) the subject matter of what you talk about with your consultant as seems most appropriate.

Informal Online Discussions

Effective online discussions go beyond posting perspectives or opinions. They challenge thinking and deepen understanding of the concepts by exploring others' ideas and perspectives. Discussions are organized around each week's unit but also build on prior weeks' learning. This class requires regular, active participation in each discussion. "Active participation" means that you read **and** contribute substantively to the online discussions on multiple days throughout the class week. At a minimum:

- answer the opening question, thoughtfully and completely
- reply within 48 hours to all questions posed to you individually or to the class as a whole; do not let questions go unanswered
- engage with different classmates each day you post using what you have learned

in the class.

Your discussion participation will not be judged on spelling, grammar or usage, however posts must be understandable and relate to the subject matter being discussed.

IMPORTANT: Online discussions cannot be made up and missed discussions will impact your grade. If you have an exceptional circumstance that prevents you from participating in a discussion, contact the facilitator immediately.

Assessment and Grading

Grading Scale

Your grade will be determined relative to the following basic criteria:

Partnership Assessment Criteria (students assesses):

- Was consistently on time for meetings with collaborative learning partner and gave full attention to partner for the full length of the meeting.
- Functioned primarily in the process consultant mode (rather than the "doctor" or "expert" mode).
- Articulated and reflected on experiences in a collaborative way.
- Understood the issues and material being presented in the course.
- Supported partners' growth and learning through effective feedback.

Essay Assessment Criteria (instructor assesses):

- Your essays show that you understand the issues of the course.
- Your essays discuss the learning you gained from the reading, the online discussions and your partner work.
- You carefully develop your own ideas and understandings about the class material in your essays.
- Your essays clearly demonstrate the competencies you are taking in the course.
- You express your ideas clearly, concisely and completely in your essays.

Personal Development Plan Assessment Criteria (instructor assesses):

- You identify a minimum of three actions to continue, stop or change based on your learning from your reading, discussion, partner work and essays
- You describe how you will do these things
- You describe specific situations where you will do these things and the results you expect from each proposed change
- You describe how these results will improve your learning and that of others
- You express your ideas clearly, concisely and completely in your plan

Discussion Board Assessment Criteria (instructor assesses):

- You contributed actively to the class discussion
- Your contributions added to the quality of the collaborative conversation
- Your contributions encouraged others' participation
- You provided clear and respectful comments to others
- Your participation demonstrated your understanding of the concepts and material from the class

Each criteria is assessed on a five-point scale: very well, well, adequately, not very well, or not well. A "very well" is worth 5 points. A "well" is worth 4 points. An "adequately" is worth 3 points. A "Not too well" is worth 2 points. A "not well" is worth 1 point. Each assessment is worth 25 possible points and there are 12 assessments during the class: five essays, two self assessments on your learning partnerships, one assessment from each of your learning partners, one end-of-class personal development plan and two participation assessments (one at the mid-point, the second at the end of the class.) Your total points translate into your final letter grade for the class:

285-300 points = A	210-224 points = C+
270-284 points = A-	195-209 points = C
255-269 points =B+	180-194 points = C-
240-254 points = B	165-179 points = D+
225-239 points = B-	150-164 points = D
	< 150 points = F

For example, you might receive the following on an essay:

Well (4 points)

Well (4 points)

Very well (5 points) – A total of 22 points for this essay

Well (4 points)

Very well (5 points)

NOTE: Assessment forms for all these criteria are available online.

SNL Grading Policy for Lifelong Learning Courses

In certain SNL courses in the Lifelong Learning Area of the BA curriculum, instructors regularly use the pass/fail grading system. However, SNL also offers students the opportunity in several of these courses to select a "Grading" option where grades A through C– represent passing performance. The faculty member and the individual student together decide which system will best promote the student's learning in that particular course. With no exceptions, a student must obtain permission from the instructor to use the grade option by the beginning of the third week of the quarter. After the third week of the quarter the assessment style agreed upon, whether pass/fail or grading, cannot be changed. The instructor is required to provide the student the specific assessment criteria by which a grade will be determined prior to the student officially selecting this option. Grading criteria shall appear in the syllabus along with pass/fail assessment criteria.

Lifelong Learning courses that already employ a grading system such as *Quantitative Reasoning* and *Collaborative Learning* will continue to use this system. The Lifelong Learning courses *Learning Assessment Seminar*, *Foundations*, and *Summit Seminar* will continue to employ the pass/fail system exclusively. This policy applies to the other lifelong learning competencies and courses including, *Academic Writing for Adults*, *Critical Thinking*, *Research Seminar*, and *Externship*. The pass/fail policy and procedure of the university found in the student handbook should be followed where a student wishes to seek this option for a graded course.

Final Grades

At the end of the quarter, you will receive a letter grade for each competence you registered for. **If you choose to take the course on a Pass/Fail basis, you must inform the instructor in writing by the end of the second week** of the course. Once you have made this choice, you cannot change back to a letter grade.

Your final grade(s) will be calculated using the points you earn for the following:

Forms of assessment:	Number of assessments:	Percent of Final Grades
Your and your partners' evaluation of your collaborative learning partnerships	4 (two by you, one each from your client and consultant partners)	33%
Instructor's evaluation of your personal development plan	1 (at the end of the course)	8%
Instructor's evaluation of your essays	5 (one for each essay)	42%
Instructor's evaluation of your participation in online discussions	2 (one in the middle and one at the end of the course)	17%

As an example:

Self and partner assessments:	Total points earned = 85
Personal Development Plan	Total points earned = 22
Essays:	Total points earned = 115
Participation assessments:	Total points earned = 42
Total points:	264 = B+

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Policies

Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other

university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If a instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. The Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) determines appropriate accommodations through consultation with the student. For certain learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders, the Productive Learning Strategies Program (PLuS) determines the appropriate accommodations. See the instructor for more information or call OSD at 773-325-7290 (phone) or 773-325-7296 (TTY); or call PLuS at 773-325-1677.

Incomplete Grades

The intent of the Incomplete grade is to allow students extra time to complete their final assignments. This need arises because, in the closing weeks of the course, they have an event of significant magnitude that adversely affects their ability to complete the course, e.g. serious illness, death in the family, overseas deployment, or natural disaster.

You must request an incomplete grade in writing two weeks before the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades will be considered only after you have satisfactorily completed at least 75 percent of the coursework, and you have such an unexpected, uncontrollable event that prevents you from completing your course. Do not assume that you will qualify for an incomplete. Students who are failing the course at the point where they request an incomplete will not receive one, nor will they be granted after the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor.

If you do receive permission from the instructor to take an incomplete in the course, you will be required to complete a contract with the instructor, specifying how you will finish the missing work within the next two quarters (excluding summer). Incompletes not finished by the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) will automatically become an F grade on your transcript.

Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without

the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee.

NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

Protection of Human Subjects

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>.

Demonstrating the acquisition of competences in this course can involve "interactions" —interviewing and or observing other people—discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s). As such, these activities qualify as "research" with "human subjects" and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning's Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

1. The information you collect is **EXCLUSIVELY** for the purpose of classroom discussion and will **NOT** be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will **EVER** use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
2. You assess and ensure that no "harm"—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
3. The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
 - a. If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an "informed consent" document. For information on creating an "informed consent document" see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>.

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Course Expectations

Time Management and Attendance

SNL's online courses are **not** self-paced. They require a regular, weekly time commitment throughout the quarter and require no less time than traditional classroom courses. To be successful in this course:

- Log in to your course at least **FOUR** times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.
- Dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies.

A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week. This course will require at least the same time commitment, possibly more, spread out through each week. The following might give you an idea of the weekly time commitment to plan for. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, you may need more time.

- Reading the assigned text and Blackboard module: 1 to 2 hours
- Weekly collaborative learning practice with partners: 1 to 1.5 hours (in the first six units of the course)
- Reading and contributing to online discussions (spread out over the week): 2 to 4 hours
- Writing formal essays and personal development plan: 2 to 4 hours per assignment

To be successful in this class, plan to spend between 6 to 11.5 hours on this course every week.

IMPORTANT: Notify the instructor if your life events do not allow you to participate fully in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important in terms of online discussions and/or your partner work. If you start to fall behind, contact the instructor immediately.

Your Instructor's Role

Your instructor is a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. They are not responsible to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments on time. Your instructor will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments.

The instructor may designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

Your Role as a Student

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. Since the instructor is a learning guide, you are responsible for leading your own learning.

You will need to manage your time so you can complete the course readings, activities and assignments and you will need to take a significant, active role in peer learning.

Using WIMBA

This class incorporates the WIMBA online meeting tool which is part of the class site. Activities which may be held in the WIMBA classroom include all class meetings, private office hours meetings or workshops (e.g. tips on essay writing or how to clearly demonstrate competences). It is the student's responsibility to be able to use WIMBA and to resolve any problems prior to attending a WIMBA session. Your instructor will provide details about how this technology will be used in your class.

Credits

This course was designed and produced by Dr. Michael Skelley and staff of SNL Online at DePaul University. It was updated in 2005 and 2007 by Paula Bartholome

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