

Collaborative Learning

Course Information

Assessment

Policies

Course Expectations

Course Information

Course Description

This is an online distance learning course in which 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 if we work with one another. 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: in our homes and workplaces, with our friends and families, at schools or in community organizations.

In this class you will read and discuss Edgar Schein's book ***Process Consultation Revisited***, which is about the theory and skills of helping each other learn. You will practice your skills on a regular basis with two other learners in the course via telephone. You will participate in informal online discussions through which you will share what you are learning and practice what you are learning. You will also have the opportunity to give and receive feedback with classmates about the process of learning collaboratively. Finally, you will submit formal reflection essays and be assessed on your participation in the class discussions. Class discussion will occur each class week and take place entirely online.

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 establishing a collaborative learning relationship.
- active listening and inquiry skills appropriately to establish and maintain a collaborative learning relationship.
- Identify, explain and reflect on the intra-psychic processes that are involved in collaborative learning.
- Identify, explain and reflect on the hidden cultural processes involved in collaborative learning.
- Exchange deliberate feedback using clearly understood principles in order to facilitate collaborative learning.

- Intervene in the task processes of a group or organization in a way that will facilitate collaborative learning.
- Intervene in the interpersonal processes of a group to facilitate collaborative learning.
- Explain the principles of a process consultation approach to collaborative learning.

Course Resources

To buy your books, go to <http://www.mbsdirect.net>.

Hint: type "DePaul" for name of the school.

Required Textbook

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

Everyone taking the course is expected to read the text according to the schedule provided. Collaborative learning involves helping others, and being helped by others, to learn. The skills that Schein discusses are essential for developing helping relationships that support learning. This is an excellent, very readable and practical book from the leading authority in this field.

Other readings may be announced as the course develops. You should complete all reading assignments in a timely fashion so that you can actively contribute to the course and meet the expectations with regard to your participation in class discussions, collaborative learning practice pair partners and reflection 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 for this course, therefore, 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 will:

- 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 will:

- Identify 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 will:

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

Please note: the wording of this 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

The course is divided into an introduction and four modules. The modules are subdivided into units. The four modules have a total of nine units.

You will develop the competencies in this course through a variety of methods: readings, collaborative learning practice with classmates, informal online discussions, and formal reflection essays.

To view the course schedule, click on the Schedule link on the left-hand navigation bar. This page contains the most recently updated listing of the topics and assignments due for each week of the course.

[Top](#)

Assessment

Assessment Criteria for Writing Assignments

1. General Expectations for Reflection Essays

You are required to submit five formal reflection essays to the instructor. These reflection essays should synthesize what you have learned, experienced and done. **Do not summarize or outline the reading.**

Each essay should also demonstrate the competence (or competencies) you are taking in the class. The expectations for demonstrating competence are described in the Course Competence section above.

The dates and times that the essays are due are listed within each unit. **NOTE: Be sure you submit your essays on time. Each essay submitted late and without prior approval from the facilitator equals a ½ grade reduction of your final grade for the class.**

Each reflection essay for students taking one competence is limited to 550 words; essays for students taking two competences are limited to 1100 words.

Begin your essay with a brief paragraph summarizing the content of the essay. Then clearly synthesize your thoughts on the subject of your essay. The instructor will provide feedback on your essays, however, in general, each essay should be a clear, concise and coherent discussion of what you have learned from **all** sources in the course; this

means **at a minimum the text, the discussion board and your work with your partners.**

Be sure that your essay clearly relates to the competence (or competencies) you are taking. That means that you should put the competence statement(s) – including the specific aspects/bullets that you are speaking to – at the top of each essay. Also put the word count and your name at the beginning of each essay. And be sure a blank "Reflection Essay Assessment Form" is included (copied and pasted in) as the last page.

Essays should follow the accepted standards of English spelling, grammar, and usage. Do not write in stream of consciousness style. **If your essays are not according to the style and formatting guidelines described here, you will be asked to revise them before they are graded.** You may also be referred to DePaul's Writing Center. It is a resource to assist you improve writing of all kinds and can be accessed at: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/>

Personal Development Plan

As the capstone assignment, you will craft a specific, written plan for continuing to develop your collaborative learning skills based on what you learned in this class. The plan should clearly identify the source of your learning from the class and identify at least three things you will start doing, stop doing or do differently to be a more effectively collaborative learner. In addition, you will include a description of the specific situations where you will use these behaviors; the different outcome you hope to achieve by making these changes; and how this will improve the learning experience for you and others.

Assessment Criteria for Collaborative Learning Practice Pairs

You will be assigned to two collaborative learning pairs. In one pair, you will be a consultant to a classmate. In the other pair, you will be a client for a different classmate. You will use these pairings to practice the skills explained by Edgar Schein in our textbook, *Process Consultation Revisited*.

1. General Expectations for Collaborative Learning Pairs

Starting Week 2 you will practice collaborative learning with each of your partners once a week for 30 minutes for six exercises. For the first five weeks you will spend one hour per week engaged in collaborative learning with your classmates: a half hour with one partner where you are the consultant and a separate half hour with a different partner where you are the client. Specific instructions for these collaborative learning practice sessions are below.

The purpose of this 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.

At the end of every meeting, exchange feedback with your partner in an effort 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 feedback based on principles learned in the class. Then you will submit assessments of yourself in both your roles and assessments for both your partners. These assessment criteria are listed below in section VII: Assessment and Grading. Assessment forms are in the assignment area.

The instructor will not share these assessments with your partners, however as part of

your final grade they must include comprehensive, specific narrative clearly explaining your ratings. Assessments without this information will be returned for correction. Tip: Refer to the forms from the beginning of your partner work to help you focus on what you will need to construct the narrative comments.

2. Basic Ground Rules for Collaborative Learning Pairs

You instructor will email your partner assignments after registration closes. Consultants should immediately contact their clients by email to introduce themselves and schedule appointments for the weekly meetings. Clients should respond to their consultants within no more than 48 hours. **Any problems making contact with partners should be communicated to the instructor immediately.**

The *content* or subject matter of these sessions is confidential, but the *process* is not. This means that as a *Consultant* you may not discuss with anyone else (including the instructor) what your client talks about in your conversations. As a *Client* you are free to choose to share (or not share) the content of your work with your Consultant as seems most appropriate.

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. What you can share outside your practice sessions is your reflection *on the skills that you and your partner used and the way you worked together as well as insights or learnings you have gained*. **Violation of the confidentiality of the content of your client's conversation is a very serious matter and may impact your grade.**

Starting Week 2 you must "meet" weekly for 30 minutes with your client-partner and for 30 minutes with your consultant-partner.

Meetings are to be conversations not text messages or email. You may have your meetings over the telephone or use Microsoft Messenger to have online voice conversations.

The *consultant* is responsible for scheduling all meetings and initiating the calls. Partners should respect each others time and be prompt. 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. **Please note: Failing to be available and/or to participate in scheduled meetings may lower your final grade. Failing to complete all exercises will lower your final grade.**

Both parties should have their conversations in a place and at a time free from distractions or interruptions.

Grading Scale

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

Assessment Criteria for Collaborative Learning Partnerships*:

- 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.

*Note: For all self and partner assessments, you must also provide written narrative to fully explain the ratings given. The absence of complete narrative may impact your grade.

Assessment criteria for your reflection essays (instructor assesses):

- Your reflection essay clearly relates to or demonstrates the competencies you are taking in the course.
- Your reflection essays show that you understand the issues of the course.
- You are able to integrate the reading, the online discussions and/or partner work and your attempts to apply your learning outside of the class.
- You are able to develop your own reflections on the material of the class in your reflection essays.
- You express your ideas clearly, concisely and completely in your reflection essays.

Personal Development Plan Criteria:

- You assess your abilities as a collaborative learner based on multiple sources of learning (identify a minimum of three actions to continue, stop or change)
- You describe situations where you will do these things
- You describe 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
- You contributed in a way that added to the quality of the collaborative conversation
- You participated in a way that encouraged participation and comments from others
- You provided clear and respectful comments to others
- You demonstrated your understanding of the concepts and material from the class
- ***Each missed discussion will result in a ½ grade reduction of your final grade.**

Whenever we use a set of the assessment criteria given above, you will be assessed on each specific item in the set. There are five levels at which you can fulfill each item: very well, well, adequately, not very well, 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. Since there are five items in each set of assessment criteria, there are a total of 25 possible points in any one set of criteria. And there are 12 sets of criteria (five reflection 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 covering Weeks 1-5, the second covering Weeks 6-10)). The total points you receive in all sets of assessment criteria translate into letter grades as follows:

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: when the instructor uses the criteria given above to assess one of your reflection essays, you might receive the following assessment:

- a. Well (4 points)
- b. Well (4 points)
- c. Very well (5 points)
- d. Well (4 points)
- e. Very well (5 points)

You would have received a total of 22 points for this reflection essay.

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 be given a letter grade for each competence you registered for. **If you wish 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 chosen to do so, you cannot change back to a letter grade.

Your final grade(s) will be calculated using the points you have earned for each category of assessment weighted as follows:

Forms of assessment:	Number of assessments:	Percent of Final Grades
-----------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------

Evaluation of your collaborative learning partnerships by yourself and your two partners.	4 (two by you, one by your client-partner and one by your consultant partner)	25%
Your personal development plan to improve your collaborative learning skills	1 (at the end of the course)	8%
Instructor's evaluation of your reflection essays	5 (one for each reflection essay)	42%
Instructor's evaluation of your participation in the 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
Reflection essays:	Total points earned = 115
Participation assessments:	Total points earned = 42
Total points:	264 = B+

Informal Online Discussions

You are expected to actively participate in the online discussions with your classmates and the instructor. "Active participation" means that you read **and** contribute substantively to the online discussions on a regular basis throughout the class week. At a minimum you must answer the opening question, thoughtfully and completely and engage with at least one classmate for each Discussion. This is considered "Adequate" participation. Your comments will not be judged for how well you follow accepted standards of English spelling, grammar, and usage however they must be clear and relate to the subject matter being discussed. These discussions are a place for you to exchange your reflections with the others in the class about what you are learning and to deepen your understanding by exploring others ideas and perspectives. The discussions will be organized into forums around the particular unit you are studying each week.

How much should you contribute? Plan to respond to each week's discussion questions and to engage with at least two other students in each discussion. During the class try to be sure that you do not leave any classmates out of the conversation.

The criteria the instructor will use to assess your contributions to the informal online discussions are listed below in the Assessment and Grading section. **NOTE:** Discussions will have a beginning and ending date and time. Once a discussion has ended, it cannot be "made up." Each unexcused missed discussion equals a ½ grade reduction of your final grade.

[Top](#)

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>.

[Top](#)

Course Expectations

Time Management and Attendance

SNL's online courses are **not** self-paced and require a regular time commitment **EACH** week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least **FOUR** times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to 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. But your learning activities will be spread out through the week. The following might give you some idea of what kind of time commitment to expect each week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

- Reading assignment: 1 to 2 hours
- Weekly collaborative learning practice with classmates: 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 reflection essays and personal reflection plans: 2 to 4 hours per assignment

So you should expect to spend between 6 to 11.5 hours on this course every week.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact the instructor immediately.

Your Instructor's Role

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he 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 choose to 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. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

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

©2003-5 School for New Learning, DePaul University. All Rights Reserved by SNL.

Printed in the USA.

